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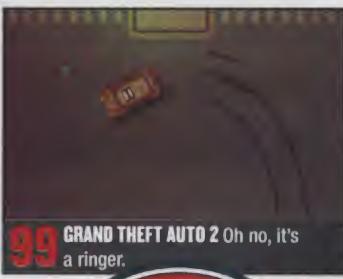
PURE INDY PURE ACTION

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PlayStation 2
unveiled on
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THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS

Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win some PC goodies. Send your entry on a postcard addressed to: The Compo No One Finds (84), PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7H. The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a mystery prize. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date: Friday 3 December 1999. The winner of our December (#83) cover compo was Alison Watt from Lancaster, who wins something from the ZONE prize cupboard for sending in the correct answer (unlike) to last month's little teaser.



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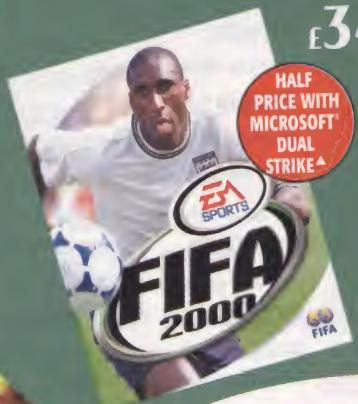
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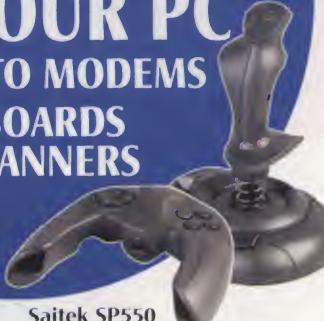
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WHO NEEDS DVD?

It's a question asked by many of you every month: "Is it worth buying a DVD drive now or should I wait till later?" Our answer has always been the same: no, don't do it, no games, no point etc. We lied. Not deliberately of course, but we lied. Through our teeth.

You see, we have just discovered how DVD drives can be incredibly useful to gamesplayers the world over. Try playing *Baldur's Gate*, *Discworld Noir*, *Nomad Soul* and a host of other games that come on multiple CDs and you will soon get very irritated with the frequency you need to change CDs in the middle of the game (particularly if your CD-ROM drive takes an age to access stuff, as is the case with most of them these days). It's not the most annoying thing in the whole wide world, but it is a pain. So, why don't we get a DVD version in the same box as

the CD version? Bin all those CDs and stick all the data on one shiny new DVD and everyone will be happy. Developers can hardly argue there is no market for it, all new systems come complete with DVD drives (this has been the case for quite some time), so it can only be the extra expense developers incur when duplicating their games a second time to accommodate DVD owners. We don't care. We want DVD versions of all games, and we want them now, even if it means we have to suffer the likes of *Phantasmagoria 3*, or *Myst 11*, or some other stupid thing that nobody wants that claims to 'fully utilise' DVD.

Apart from conveniently having all your games' data on one handy DVD however, we can think of no other reason to buy a DVD drive if your PC hasn't already got one. There are still few

games available for the format, but that will surely change. The next millennium will see DVD games become the rule rather than the exception, and games will have massive environments with superb graphics and ridiculously detailed textures thanks to the storage capacity of this comparatively new format.

Of course, that doesn't mean they'll be any better: remember the dross we were fed when the CD-ROM revolution first started? Crap FMV adventure games were everywhere. Expect more of the same when the first generation of DVD-based PC games arrive, but we might also get a new generation of classics that take full advantage of DVD to provide us with huge games to keep us happy for months. That's the theory, but we could be lying again. Enjoy the issue, see you next month.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

All PC ZONE's reviewers are experts in their field. We like to give every game that comes in for review the best chance, which is why we give it to a reviewer who's a fan of the genre



CHRIS ANDERSON



DAVE WOODS



RICHIE SHOEMAKER



MARK HILL



PAUL MALLINSON



STEVE HILL

What is your prediction for the Christmas Number 1?

Age Of Empires II.

Quake III.

No idea, it's bound to be shit. I'll go for Number 2 instead.

Championship Manager 99/00. It's the only one that matters.

Quake III, it's as big as games get.

Cliff Richard or Championship Manager 99/00.

Which is the best adventure game you've ever played and why?

Countdown, brilliant plot and the most challenging adventure I've ever played.

Day Of The Tentacle. It got my girlfriend into computer games. While it lasted, anyway.

Sam & Max, it's the only game that's made me piss my pants.

Day Of The Tentacle. Brilliant storyline, hilarious dialogue.

Resident Evil 2, because it's shit scary.

The Hobbit on the Spectrum because of the great graphics.

What is your prediction for the Christmas Number 1?

The latest release of Avoiding The Relatives.

Quake III. See Keith's comment.

Quake III, no matter what it's like it's gonna sell shitloads.

Quake III, because you've got a good feeling about it.

Bryan Adams.

Quake III.

Which is the best adventure game you've ever played and why?

Final Fantasy VII: it's big, weird and funny. Like a breakdancing hippo. (But it's not an adventure game, you tit - Ed.)

The Last Express, because it's the first game that treated me like an adult.

The Spoon Of Zack, which I wrote myself on Spectrum.

Both Little Big Adventures, because they're so imaginative.

Ultima Underworld. It was funny and scary at the same time.

Hitch-Hikers Guide To The Galaxy for the CP/M. Those who've played it will understand.

PCZONE

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WIN! Complete this LucasArts game title: *Day Of The...*? Send entries on the back of a postcard to: 'I've read the small print, PC ZONE (84), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ by Friday 3 December. Winner and prize announced same place next issue. Dave Ellis from Hants' wins the ZONE grab bag of goodies from last month's compo for correctly answering that David Bowie features in *The Nomad Soul*. Well done, Dave.'

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NEXT ISSUE: PCZ #85 (Jan) goes on sale on Thursday 16 December. Don't miss it!

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Unfair Advantage № 26



Kevin's hands on approach
saved goals throughout the season

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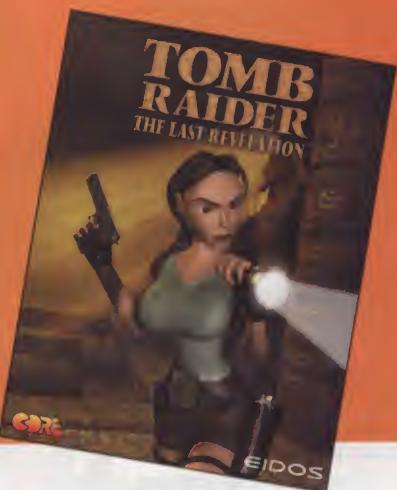
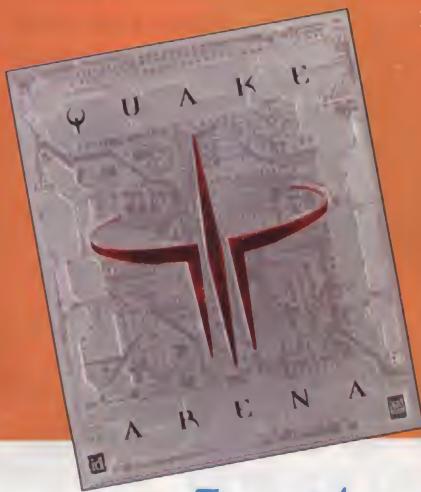
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MAILBOX



Make music, not war, says one tune-friendly reader, while the rest of you rant on endlessly about patches.

Not wanting to feel left out, we join in

★ ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

CONTACT INFO

Write to us, and if your letter is selected as Letter of the Month we'll send you a prize.

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CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info.

IT'S ONLY A GAME

★ In your December issue, you have several articles on PC gaming going professional and making it a sport. I agree that there are many skilled and talented gamers out there who are capable of making mincemeat of Hannibal on *Age II*, or making people victims of permanent volleys of ammunition, but I think some people take it too seriously. I have recently been playing *Tib Sun* over the dial-up connections against some mates from school. The thing is, I am constantly

getting my ass kicked. I have played about seven matches and have only won two – not an impressive tally. They take it so seriously, demanding rematches after their defeats at my hands, but I can't really be arsed, to be honest – I lose on purpose to get the game over with! I just hope PC gaming does not get too serious – I think this would inevitably kick out casual gamers from all online play. What do you have to say about this?

James Shawe

★ OK, some people might take it too seriously, but you seem to have gone to the other extreme. Why waste time playing competitive multiplayer games if you don't care whether you win or lose? It



Tiberian Sun drove James Shawe to defeat. Or so he says.

sounds like online gaming is perhaps not your thing, but fear not, there will always be excellent single-player games for those of you who don't like the competitive edge of the multi-player community. Each to their own, eh?

TOP BOTS

★ I read PC ZONE every month because it's witty, the reviews are spot-on and the cover discs are cool. The main thing that caught my eye in issue 83 was the inclusion of the Jumbots for *Half-Life*. As I don't have Internet access at home, I can only play multiplayer

with friends who have their own networks.

I thought playing with the Jumbots was excellent. Most of them were around my level of playing but there were a couple of real sharpshooters, so I had my work cut out keeping up. I think all developers should release AI-controlled bots (*Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III* are good examples) to cater for people who don't have net access and are fed up with the single-player game. Are there any plans for AvP bots?

Daniel Jupp

★ The Jumbots proved so popular with so many of you that we are currently

“Playing with the Jumbots was excellent. Most were around my skill level but there were a couple of real sharpshooters”

DANIEL JUPP GOES POTTY FOR BOTS

LETTER OF THE MONTH

TUNED IN

I have been a regular reader of your magazine for almost a year now, and while your reviews are always insightful and usually very detailed, I feel there is one important element of games that your reviewers seem to have overlooked: music.

The music in a computer game can, in some instances, do more to create an atmosphere than the graphics, in my opinion. It's one of the only things PlayStation owners can brag about – most PlayStation games have more and better quality music than their PC conversions.

However, it isn't the quality or quantity of music that bothers me. It is that your magazine, and most PC games magazines, don't seem to notice it at all. Either your reviewers turn the music off when they review a game, or they just don't think it's that important – but it is.

Take the *Tomb Raider* games as an example (except *TR1*, which had hardly any music at all). These games just wouldn't be as interactive, atmospheric or playable without the incidental music.

On the other hand, you can take *Quake 2*, where the music is just annoying. It's titles like this that give music in games a bad name.

Music, I think, should become an increasingly important element to games development in the future. As technology progresses, orchestra-like compositions are easy to create using computers. And it's only the beginning, or so say Microsoft. With future versions of Direct X, composers will be able to create music that automatically changes



Wargasm looks great and sounds even better. Sort of.

depending on the game character's environment.

So come on, PC ZONE, why not take notice, and start mentioning in your reviews how good/average/awful the music is?

Ben Hamilton

★ We heartily agree that music in games is very important. Which is why we will tell you if a game has particularly good music (*Wargasm*, for example), or if the in-game tunettes are particularly rank (as in most PC games, unfortunately). So, we feel no need to give a separate rating for music. But yes, generally speaking, game soundtracks could be a lot more captivating. Developers: try harder.

SUPER PRIZES TO BE WON

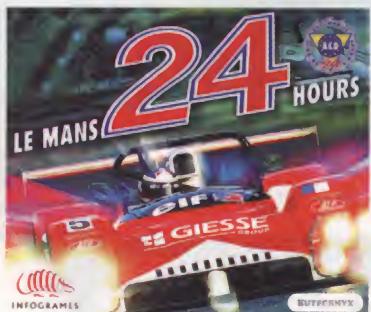
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Got no friends? Can't access the Internet? You'll be needing a few bots, then.

compiling as many bots as we can with the intention of popping them on to a forthcoming CD for your gaming pleasure. There are no plans for AvP bots as far as we know.

THE GREAT PATCH DEBATE

★ I work for a computer software company on the Technical Support line. We get loads of calls from people who instantly threaten us with the OFT, *Watchdog* (the BBC programme, not your esteemed help page) and all manner of other ills when they experience what they term to be bugs.

I would like to put our side of the story. I appreciate and acknowledge that games are released with bugs in order to meet deadlines, but the vast majority of problems gamers experience are down to hardware compatibility problems. We sell ten times more PlayStation copies of a game than PC, yet 90% of our calls and emails are for PC games. I estimate that if you consider video cards, sound cards, game controllers and motherboards, there are over a billion different hardware combinations on the market. You try testing for compatibility on every one of these.

My message is this: if you play games on a PC, you should expect some problems. Don't always think they're bugs, and try to work with us to help solve your problem, rather than shouting at us and thinking you've been ripped off. And if you can't handle any of the above, buy a console.

Name withheld by request

I am writing in response to the Letter of the Month in PCZ #83. I think patches are 'the best thing since the dawn of computers' because they enable the owner of a game to have a way to fix it or improve the game if it is not perfect at the time of release.

The fact that console users don't have to contend with patches is bad for them, because if a game is released on their console which is bugged, they cannot fix it or have a way of sorting it out. PC games are more complex than console games and therefore patches are needed more often. PC games which are released on consoles are often significantly changed so that the game will work on the console.

Also, I think games are hardly ever 'rushed' out - they have normally been planned to come out for Christmas. Patches are a Godsend, if you ask me, and I have found the patches on PC ZONE's cover discs incredibly useful for fixing and updating my games.

Peter Wellby

I am writing with regard to Paul Boland's letter in your December 99 issue.

He is right that a lot of developers rush games out before they have chance to test them properly. I was a beta tester for *Settlers 3* and despite almost all the beta testers telling Blue Byte the game wasn't ready, they released it anyway in time for the Christmas spending orgy. The mighty pound/mark/dollar is more important than anything else to some people.

The biggest reason for patching PC games, though,

is the myriad different PC configurations possible. With 3D cards having a lifespan of nanoseconds these days, there will always be some games that don't work with some of the newer cards. I've had to patch a lot of games after swapping from a Riva128 to a Banshee card and I fully expect to do the same when I get my G400

► I estimate that there are over a billion different hardware combinations. You try testing for compatibility on every one

Pete Pointon

★ Paul Boland's letter has elicited more responses than any other printed in Mailbox in recent times. Many of you have flamed him for having the nerve to compare PC games to their (usually unbugged) console counterparts. The fact of the matter is this: nobody will ever complain about

NAME WITHHELD BY REQUEST

Max. PlayStations (and other consoles) all have the same hardware and operating system (none of this Win95/98/NT malarkey), so the developers know what they are dealing with. PC developers are having to deal

a patch that fixes compatibility issues. In this respect, PC gamers are indeed a lucky bunch: downloading a patch that makes a game work with your new 3D card 'by magic' is indeed a

wonderful thing. But a 20Mb patch that 'fixes' the *gameplay* in a title is wholly unacceptable.

Pete Pointon's claim that *Settlers 3* was rushed out for Christmas despite the beta testers telling Blue Byte the game was not ready simply defies belief, but as we have seen with many games recently (*Hidden & Dangerous* being a current case in point), publishers are more than happy to shovel out any old cack, safe in the knowledge that they can patch it all up later and use the public as unpaid playtesters into the bargain. Console owners do not have this problem as a rule because publishers of console games only get one chance to get their games right. To reiterate the stupidly obvious, then: *nobody* is complaining about patches that enhance games or address compatibility issues, but patches that have obviously been created to fix a game that was clearly unfinished at the time of its release should be treated with contempt.

Our feature on this subject has been delayed due to certain games publishers' reluctance to explain why some of their titles were released in a mess. They have all been given a time limit in which to respond to us. Watch this space. □



Hidden & Dangerous: several patches on, it still has its problems.

SEGA PC™

SEGARALLY 2

SEGA RALLY™
CHAMPIONSHIP



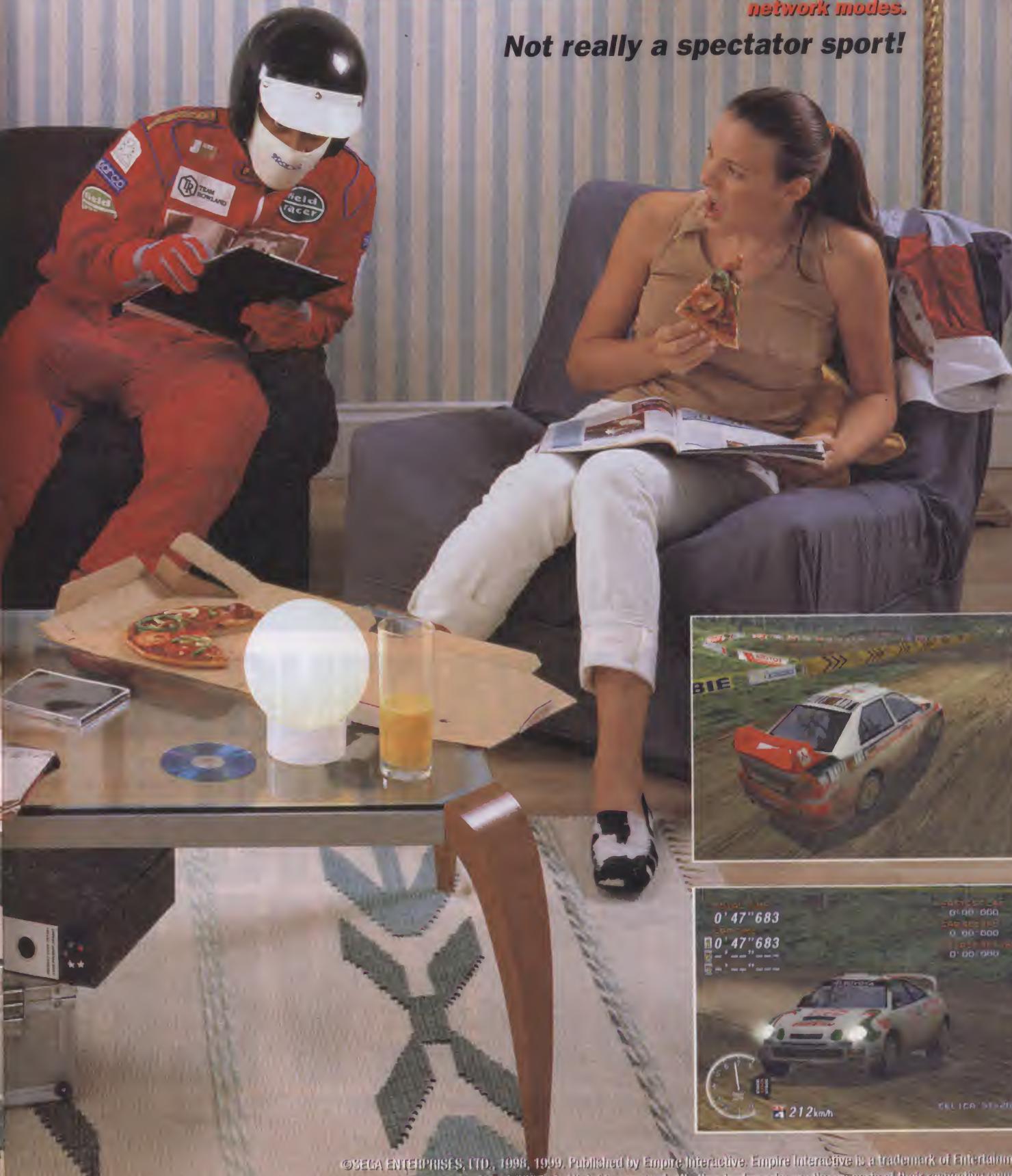
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Not really a spectator sport!



SEGA

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INTERACTIVE

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TOP STORY

“Location-specific damage has been taken to the next level, with hits registering on each polygon (there'll be 1,000 per model) allowing for the most realistic death routines yet seen”

Don't eat the squid, it repeats on you big-style.



WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DUKE NUKEM FOREVER

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER 3D Realms
PUBLISHER GT Interactive
WEBSITE www.3drealms.com
RELEASE DATE April/May 2000

IN SUMMARY

Traditional first-person shooter starring everyone's favourite stogie-chewing hero, this month using the *Unreal Tournament* 3D engine.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

What's the big deal? You are joking! This is *Duke* we're talking about here. OK, so the man's a tit, but if we say *Duke Nukem Forever* is likely – nay, certain – to be better than *Half-Life*, you know it's going to be sweet. Booyakka!

Hail to the king, baby. *Duke Nukem* lives! No, really

★ PATIENTLY WAITING Richie Shoemaker



Shooting down aircraft from the back of a truck.



Very Half-Life, I must say.



Duke always had an eye for the birds.



Nice carpet.



There will be vehicles to drive and machinery to use.



What happens next? Go on, guess.



This is Gus. Or is it Benny Hill?



This time, you have time to play with yourself.

How long have we been waiting for *Duke Nukem Forever*? I'll tell you – years! We've been chewing at the bit for so long, we were beginning to think 3D Realms had given up on the old codger for good.

It's been 18 months since even a screenshot was released and, since then, the game has switched from using the then-groundbreaking *Quake II* engine to *Unreal's*. Even as we scramble these words together, the developers are working in yet more code from *Unreal Tournament*. If it weren't for the delayed *Daikatana* taking all the heat, 3D Realms would have become a laughing stock.

Actually, that's not true. The differences between Ion Storm and 3D Realms are many. 3D Realms have played the waiting game perfectly. They have neither broken any promises nor hyped up their abilities. So silent have they been that even the publishers, GT Interactive, have been

turned away at the door. For months, ZONE has been phoning GT, asking for screenshots, details, anything, each time being told: "We know as much as you do." Quite rightly, we believed them. However, now things are different...

FOREVER-LASTING STORY

One thing *Duke* has never been big on is storyline. True to spirit, *Duke Forever* is as throwaway as they come. Dr Protoss, antagonist from the first game (that's the side-scrolling platform game from 1991, for the benefit of our younger readers), has managed to nuke LA – not before time – and has used technology from Area 51 to unleash a stream of aliens upon the world. Duke's aim, if it isn't already evident, is to save the planet.

As well as some familiar weapons from previous games (shotgun, trip mines, desert eagle and rocket launcher), a clutch of new weapons are promised, some experimental and some based on real-world designs. In

fact, it is the real-world switch of focus that is getting many people excited. Set across Area 51, the Hoover Dam, Las Vegas and Arizona, with vehicles to drive across them, 3D Realms have managed to merge the trend for real-world locations and the cartoon feel of old.

The table-dancing girls are back, in smooth polygonal loveliness, as are a number of new central characters, such as Bombshell, a female whom Duke presumes licks the other side of the stamp, as it were, because she can resist his unique charms. As for the enemies, we are told only the pig-cops will be making a return.

Graphically, we can expect much spraying of blood and flying limbs. Location-specific damage has been taken to the next level, with hits registering on each polygon (there'll be 1,000 per model) allowing for the most realistic death routines yet seen. There will also be more enemies on-screen at any one time, thanks to the system of using mesh technology.

But what about the AI? The grating metal soundtrack? The level design? The one-liners? Dear reader, you have much to learn and months to wait. It'll keep. Be patient. As 3D Realms trickle out new shots and details, you can be sure that we'll save them all up so that we can run a big preview very soon. Very soon. **PCZ**

Go on, give us a kiss.



TOP STORY



Hang on, cp'tn,
someone'll be along
any minute... to step
on your fingers.

100

SET YOUR PHASERS ON STUN, IT'S — STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE — THE FALLEN

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER The Collective
PUBLISHER Simon & Schuster
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Spring 2000

IN SUMMARY

The Fallen is a third-person action/adventure based on the *Deep Space Nine* TV series. A wide range of missions and character interaction drive the plot, which involves a quest for three red orbs and some Bajoran evil spirits.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL

Not only can you play as Worf, Kira or Sisko, but the game will actually be different with each character. While there's some thinking involved, the main drive of the game is pure action, featuring sniper and pulse rifles and hand-to-hand combat. And you don't have to spend the whole time on the station, because that would just be boring.

Here we go, yet another game set in the Trekkie universe! We would start complaining if only it didn't look so damn good

★ FALLING FOR IT Mark Hill



"Gonna kill me some Carddies." Sisko in another diplomatic tumble.



You'll be able to choose to play different characters, like in *Blood II* and *Res Evil 2*, but better.



It's The Sisko, The Emissary, The Overacting Buffoon. And a handy insect killer.



Getting friendly with the natives is standard Federation policy.

Imagine the fly-on-the-wall docusoap *Airport* set in a futuristic space station, with a megalomaniac baritone captain, a good-natured Irish engineer, a sneaky barman and a psychotic tailor. Not to mention a shapeshifting security guard and an interesting mix of ethnic diversity. While most series of *Star Trek* are full of the excitement of travelling into the unknown, *DS9*'s usual storyline involves watching the crew fall out with each other while they drink large quantities of Klingon coffee and wait for something to happen. Its fluctuating quality seems to depend on how much time is spent on the station. Trying to give the series a darker, more claustrophobic feel is all very well, but apart from some *Alien*-esque episodes, the best ones always feature spectacular space battles and away missions.

You'll be happy to hear then, that most of *The Fallen*'s action takes place far from the dingy Cardassian station and has none of the series'

and has none of the series' cringe-inducing emotional drama. The game's developers, The Collective, have realised that *DS9* is at its finest when there's lots of action going on and they've made a fabulously good-looking third-person shooter with enough adventure elements to please die-hard fans and casual gamers alike.

The plot revolves around the quest for three red orbs, which have the

“Most of *The Fallen*'s action takes place far from the dingy Cardassian station and has none of the series' cringe-inducing emotional drama”

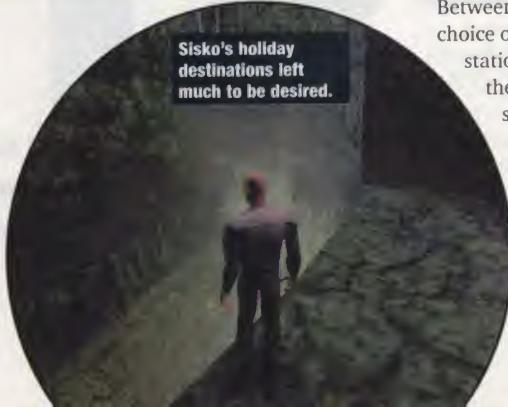
power to unlock a portal to the Pah-Wraiths (the arch enemies of the Bajoran prophets) and unleash hell on the Alpha Quadrant. You can play as Sisko (the bald captain with a penchant for baseball and stressing ev-ery syl-lable in a loud voice), Kira (the annoying Bajoran with a tendency to have tantrums) or Worf (the ultracool Klingon with a

chronic foul temper). Every mission differs depending on the character and the objectives vary according to their skills. Kira will concentrate on stealth and sabotage, Worf on butchering everything in his path while Sisko tries it all.

Thanks to a modified version of the *Unreal* engine, *The Fallen* is looking decidedly gorgeous, especially in the away missions. The settings for these

include a Dominion internment camp, a Bajoran monastery, a glacial wasteland and an alien jungle. The enemies range from *DS9* favourites like the slimy Cardassians and the Jem'Hadar soldiers (the series' answer to the Borg) to alien monsters and a new race of biomechanical pirates called the Grigari. Luckily, there are plenty of weapons at your disposal (Bat'leths, standard issue phasers, phaser rifles with sniper scopes, grenade launchers, pulse rifles) and the control method promises to be closer to *Hidden & Dangerous* than to *Tomb Raider*.

Between missions you'll have the choice of wandering around the station before embarking on the next one, increasing the sense of depth and involvement already present through puzzles and interaction with other characters. We've already fallen to our knees in adoration.



TOP STORY



The large scale destruction of small-scale soldiers.

MAP MENU

WAR HAS NEVER BEEN SO MUCH FUN AS

SUDDEN STRIKE

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER CDV Software

PUBLISHER TBA

EXPECTED RELEASE DATE January 2000

IN SUMMARY

This highly detailed, WWII-based, real-time strategy game attempts to recreate large-scale battles based on historically accurate data.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Pitched battles with thousands of troops at your disposal. Call in air raids, take part in tank skirmishes, enact battles over the whole of Europe and Russia – it's all here plus tons more.

Looking like something of a cross between *Command & Conquer* and *Cannon Fodder*, CDV's new action strategy game could prove to be a welcome breath of fresh air for the real-time strategy genre

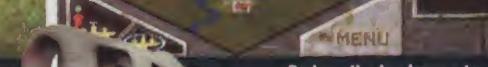
★ FRONT-LINE REPORTER: Paul Mallinson



Sudden Strike is an ambitious project that will hopefully marry the fun of real-time strategy war gaming with the scale of real-life war situations.



You don't want to be on the receiving end of that little lot.



Reduce the landscape to a muddy pulp – because you can.



You'll even be able to take out bridges with some well-aimed ordnance.



Whatever nationality you play, you'll want to get tanked up.

Strategy games based on real-life war time situations are nothing new. For years now, PC games players have had access to hundreds of stuffy, hard-core, hex/turn-based titles – even Microsoft's much-lauded *Close Combat* RTS series took itself far too seriously. So far, no one has really captured the scale and essence of the Second World War in 'proper' computer gaming terms.

Thankfully, German developers CDV look like addressing this problem with *Sudden Strike* – a new, real-time, tactical strategy game based on a harrowing period of contemporary history which is now being made into a fun computer game. You see, PC game developers often find themselves treading on egg shells when dealing with this kind of historical subject matter, resulting in compromised gameplay. In *Sudden Strike*'s case, however, the fact that the developers are German (and so see the Second

World War from a slightly different perspective) means that the rule book has gone out of the window and that game designs have not been plagued by political correctness. As a result, it looks like being the real-time strategy game we've all been waiting for.

Despite *Sudden Strike* being hailed as "the blockbuster of the new millennium" (by CDV's own PR department), and it being due

• The best thing about *Sudden Strike* is that you get to play the game from one of five different perspectives: British, American, Russian, French and German. •

out next January, its roots lie in the current decade. The developers, having chosen a fairly standard isometric viewpoint to portray the action, have resisted the temptation to go full 3D. But this is no reason to dismiss the game and early versions have shown hundreds of troops, tanks and aircraft moving about the battlefield with virtually no slowdown at all.

The best thing about *Sudden Strike* is that you get to play the game from one of five different perspectives: British, American, Russian, French and – yes – German. Currently, the game's designers have implemented Russian and German troops and have included snipers, sub-machine gunners with grenades, 'Squeeze' gunners, 'Panzerfaust' gunners, Officers, a host of tanks including

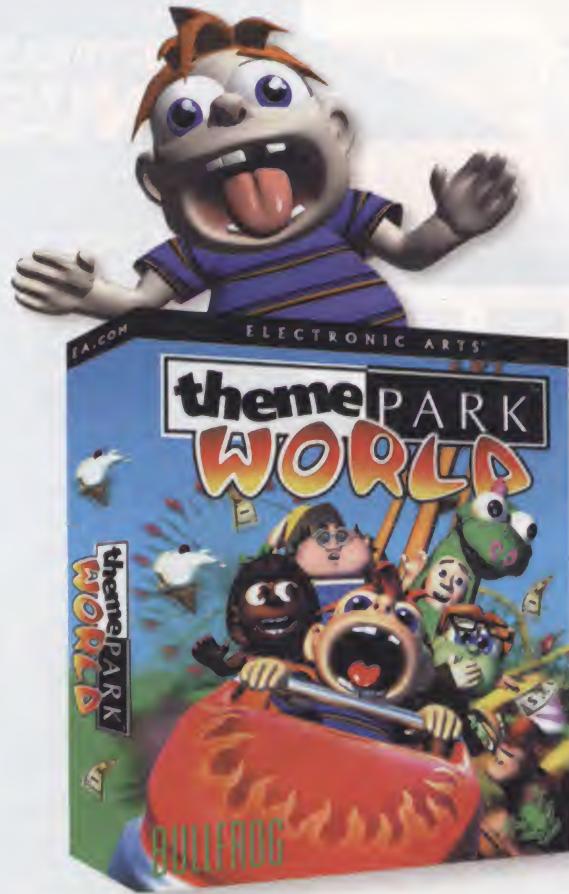
facet of a major battlefield situation. The units themselves are as small and as detailed as those seen in the recent smash hit *Tiberian Sun*. They're also convincingly animated, digging in when under attack and recoiling when they fire. Backgrounds too are extremely detailed – buildings crumble when blown up and tanks churn up fields as they rumble into battle. Many of the levels even have wide open spaces in which to do battle, which is rare in games of this kind – you're usually hemmed in by cliffs or other impassable objects.

All in all, *Sudden Strike* is a very tempting prospect for real-time strategy fans and CDV are rightly proud of what they've done so far – so proud, in fact, that they're planning to publish the game in the UK themselves. Watch out for the playable demo, which should be available by the time you read this. **W**

T34s, T26s, KV-1s, T70s, Tigers, Panthers, SturmTigers and Elephants, trucks and transport infantry, long-range howitzers, tank destroyers, assault guns, bombers, anti-aircraft artillery, reconnaissance troops, armoured cars and (phew!) explosives experts. And that's only the half of it. *Sudden Strike* will be hugely detailed and will attempt to encompass every



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CHRISTMAS BONUS

■ NEWS EDITOR Richie Shoemaker



With Christmas rapidly approaching, no doubt many of you are thinking about what you

are going to spend your holiday bonus on.

A new 3D card, perhaps? Maybe a game or two? Hell, what about a brand new PC? Looking at how much money it's going to cost just to get into a pub over the New Year, it would probably be cheaper to build an extension to house the damn thing.

Whatever you decide, the forthcoming festive season is going to be a good one for games. What better way to welcome the end of the world than to lock yourself away in a darkened room and play computer games? I know I would if I found a bulge in my next pay packet. Alas...

If we do survive the millennium bug and the chaos that ensues, next year promises to be the best yet for PC gaming. The stale formula of traditional Quake-clones seems to have died, bringing in realistic environments, wily AI and a head for strategy. Good 3D real-time strategy games are finally starting to emerge. Even the trusty role-playing game has moved on. And why is this? In a word: technology.

As has been the case since the dawn of computer gaming, the limits of current technology have always hindered games design to a larger or lesser degree, sometimes making it difficult for designers to break out of tried and trusted genres. It has only been in the past year that games have started to appear that seem to transcend these boundaries.

We used to pigeonhole games into seven established genres, but we reckon there are now double that number. Before long, we are bound to see an online first-person action/strategy RPG flight sim, which will play havoc with our Top 100, as you can imagine.

What the hell. Bring it on. Changes are afoot and as the industry moves forward, *PC ZONE* will follow it every step of the way.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

What's in, out, up and down

P.28



ONLINE DIARY

Have some free multiplayer fun huddled around a keyboard

P.34



TIBERIAN SUN RISES AGAIN

Having sold well over two million copies so far, news of an expansion pack for *C&C: Tiberian Sun* is hardly going to be a surprise to anyone. Going by the name of *Firestorm*, however, this 18 mission add-on promises the same high level of production values, with full FMV mission briefings following on the story from the original game. New units are planned, including Juggernauts, Mobile EMPs, Limpet Drones and Cyborg Reapers. A new multiplayer mode is also promised, called World Domination, which allows the player to battle across real-world locations, comparable in scope to Cavedog's *Galactic War for Total Annihilation*. *Firestorm* is due for release in February.

NEW UNITS



NOD Reaper



GDI Juggernaut



NOD Mobile Stealth Generator



Limpet Drone



Mobile EMP



GDI Mobile War Factory

RESIDENT EVIL DEAD

Bruce Campbell, star of the *Evil Dead* trilogy of films, is enjoying a spate of work. Having just added his vocal talents to NovaLogic's space sim, *Tachyon*, he is set to star in an *Evil Dead* adventure on the PC.

Evil Dead: Ashes 2 Ashes is set eight years after the third film, with Ash once again returning to the cabin where he first encountered the Necronomicon. "Today's technology will give millions of fans their first chance to experience the sometimes horrific but often times humorous adventures of Ash and the Necronomicon," says Bruce.

Developed by Heavy Iron Studios, many of whom worked on Squaresoft's PSX adventure *Parasite Eve*, *Evil Dead* will be a 3D adventure in the mould of *Resident Evil*, but with a lot more humour. No release date is set, but it looks likely that the game will appear some time next summer, courtesy of THQ.



"We'll swallow your soul, we'll swallow your soul."

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO....?

Three games that should've been here by now

P.37



TECH-HEAD

DirectX 7 – what it does and why you'll need it

P.38



MAN WHO KNOWS

The very latest industry gossip

P.43



HOTSHOTS

Big games and even bigger pictures

P.44



WELCOME TO THE REVOLUTION

Elixir's top secret is out. *Paul Presley* investigates



Elixir have been debating whether or not to include the pollen on the flower stems, says Demis Hassabis.

Sitting on the tube, thumbing through stories in *Newsweek* about the corrupt governments, military coups, political shenanigans and dodgy business deals going on in the world, I felt as though I was reading the manual for Elixir Studios' ambitious new project, announced the previous night at the Soviet Canteen in London's fashionable Chelsea.

Republic: The Revolution is a game of... well, the term 'game' is a little misleading. It's more a 'real-world simulation'. Set in the fictional East-European country of Novistrana, your goal is simple: oust the incumbent president and take control. How do you achieve this? Now there's a question.

Conspiracy theorists will love it as it's all about influence and power. There are five 'paths' on offer: militaristic, political, religious, criminal or business-related, although you can mix and match these to suit your needs. Your power base grows by recruiting members to your cause, and using them to carry out whatever cunning plans you can think of. As Elixir's Demis Hassabis explains: "You might want to start a riot in the streets, so you'll find it handy to have a few rabble-rousers to stir things up. However, if you also control the chief of police you can ensure that there's a minimal police presence around to really make it effective."

This is all well and good, but you're probably asking how many different types of people you can possibly have under your control. Thirty? Fifty? A few hundred, perhaps? Try one million. One million *individual* characters, all with their own lives, their own ideals, their own skills and their own beliefs.

Gain control of the military or, if you prefer, go for a grass-roots political campaign.



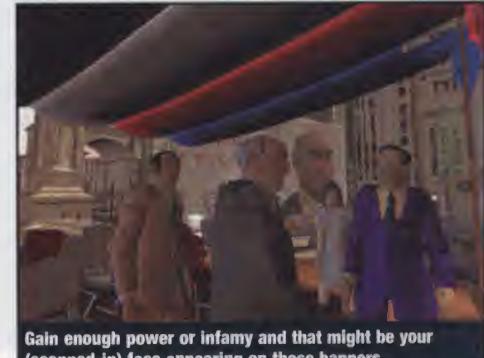
The aim is to make Novistrana a fully-working, living, breathing country. *Sim City* meets the Illuminati.



An example of just how detailed the polygon models are. Effects are yet to be added.



The graphics engine is only ten months old and is still awaiting proper light-sourcing, but it looks impressive.



Gain enough power or infamy and that might be your (scanned-in) face appearing on those banners.

This is where Elixir's presentation started to make jaws around the room drop. The scope of the game is truly beyond anything we've ever encountered before. Elixir is attempting to accurately simulate the workings of an entire country, 2,000 square kilometres in size, all modelled in real-time 3D, with a fully working infrastructure, from traffic systems to daily character routines to thousands of factions, power groups and organisations all at work with (and against) each other. And all waiting for you to jump in and stir things up.

Demonstrating some of the technology they're working with, Hassabis was rotating the camera around a pretty detailed apartment block when

suddenly he took us right up to a single three-dimensional screw on the wall. Then, in a single breathtaking motion, we

were zooming right out to a panorama of over 10,000 similar buildings, stretching off into the distance. "We've had meetings over the level of detail we're including," he grins, "in which we've been arguing whether we should stop at screws or go right on up to the pollen on flower stems." The thing is, he's not joking.

Republic isn't due out until the end of next year (although Hassabis confided in me that they were already ahead of schedule) and the main work to be done is on the actual interface. "The player should be able to just pick it up and barely have to look at the manual," he explains. "Our motto should be: hard for developers to do, easy for gamers to play."

“You'll have one million individual characters under your control, all with their own lives, skills and beliefs”



We're still waiting for bump-mapping and other advanced effects to be added.



The one million inhabitants of Novistrana all have their own lives, agendas and emotions.

SHORTS

SIGNED AND SEALED

Codemasters have expanded into the States by signing up the promising first-person action game *Navy Seals*, which was canned by Sierra earlier in the year when Yosemite Entertainment were disbanded.

Development on the game is now back in full swing, so expect a full preview early next year, with a release date being touted for next winter.



O'LEARY ON THE BOX

Caffeine Studios have enlisted Leeds United manager David O'Leary to adorn the packaging of *Football World Manager 2000*. Last year's edition sported 'Big' Ron Atkinson on the box, who subsequently took control of Nottingham Forest and led them to relegation. Expect a downturn in Leeds' fortunes soon.



DESCENT FOR HIRE

New weapons and levels for *Descent 3* mean a mission pack is on the way and its name is *Mercenary*. A seven-level mini-campaign and four multiplayer levels make up the bulk of the pack, with a host of fan-made levels and a mission editor thrown in for good measure. It should be on the shelves right about now.



BEETLEMANIA



Monster Beetle madness.



Bet you had a Matchbox one of these.

The world's favourite car and Hitler's only endearing legacy, the humble VW Beetle is getting its very own racing game next February, courtesy of Infogrames.

Beetle Crazy Cup features 18 different versions of the 'People's Car', including the Manx Buggy, Karmann Ghia, Baja Buggy and the VW Van. Five different race types are featured (speed, jump, buggy, monster racing and cross country) across 40 scenarios and 25 tracks, with five playing modes ranging from quick arcade to a full championship season.

Graphically, we can expect a range of weather effects, lots of 3D particle-based tomfoolery, reflective surfaces and gratuitous lens flare. It's hardly going to be driving game of the year, but if the developers manage to capture the personality of the humble Bug, we could be in for a treat.



A treat for Surfin' Birds everywhere.

RED SKY IN FLIGHT

Having worked on the successful *MechCommander* strategy game, Zipper Interactive are bringing another of FASA's board games to the PC, due next summer through Microsoft.

Set in an alternate reality after the Great Depression, *Crimson Skies* takes place across

the (dis)United States of America, where each state is at war with each other and the population has embraced the airplane as the preferred mode of transport. Huge zeppelins ferry cargo, more often than not coming under aerial attack from pirates – of which you are one. Over 30 different aircraft will be in the

game, many of which are based on experimental German planes from WWII, with over 20 different weapons available to each aircraft. Far from being a flight sim (in reality, most of the planes probably wouldn't get off the ground), *Crimson Skies* is touted as a fast-paced action game, based on the *MechWarrior 3* game engine.



Hooray for Hollywood.



Someone's stuck the wings on the wrong end.



No, we can't tell if that's the rear view, either.



With all the units we're expecting on-screen, the 3D engine had better be good.



Keeping supply lines open is crucial.



Buy or steal to upgrade your units.



Expect some huge sea battles.

SOVEREIGN

Next big online thing from the makers of *EverQuest*

'Massively multiplayer' has become the latest industry buzzword, aligning itself with online games that have the potential to play host to thousands of players at a time. Traditionally, most of these games are RPGs, but with Internet connections and 3D cards getting faster and cheaper, new genres are opening up for net gamers.

Currently in development from Verant Interactive (the makers of *EverQuest*) is *Sovereign*, a 3D real-time strategy game that should allow up to 500 online generals to wage war or make peace in any one game. Essentially, we are promised a mix of *C&C*, *Civilization* and *Diplomacy*, with the aim of building a global empire, with or without the help of allies. The game is played out on a world much like our own, with lush forests, arid deserts and vast oceans. As well as military production, players have to build cities, conduct research, engage in espionage and eventually take to the battlefield. With a vast range of tanks, ships, aircraft, chemical, biological and nuclear weapons all at your disposal, you can bet the battlefield is going to get pretty messy.

The specifics of gameplay have yet to be ironed out, but to combat 'powerplayers' who stay online for hours on end, a system of limiting offensive moves is likely to be initiated, with players who log off early being able to set up orders for their units while they are away. No details exist yet on how much *Sovereign* will cost to play, but a pricing structure similar to *EverQuest* is likely. We shall know more closer to the game's release next summer.

ONCE AGAIN
THE MILLENNIUM TURNS

AND STILL
THE GREATEST MYSTERY OF THE LAST
2000 YEARS REMAINS BURIED

KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

ALL HAVE QUESTED

VAMPIRE SECTS

AND SOUGHT IN VAIN

GOVERNMENTS

TO CLAIM AND CONTROL

CHURCHES

THE MOST SACRED

NATIONS

AND DIVINE SECRET

FAITHS

IN THE HISTORY OF MANKIND

NOW IT FALLS TO ONE MAN TO
UNRAVEL THE STAGGERING
REVELATION BOILING IN
THE BLOODLINE OF CHRIST

BLOOD OF THE SACRED

GABRIEL KNIGHT 3

BLOOD OF THE DAMNED

SIERRA

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CHARTS

All you need to know about which games are selling by the shedload, plus the buzz on the streets – where you tell us what you think

THE TOP 10



MEGASTORES



So you made it to the Industrial District... Try not to get on the wrong side of the Russian Mafia, converted by the Kraytons or absorbed by the Zalotov, Stargazer!

Stealing cars, gang warfare and delivering 'packages'. It's *GTA2*.

OCT	NOV	TITLE	DEVELOPER	PUBLISHER	REV SCORE
NE 1	2	GRAND THEFT AUTO 2	DMA DESIGN	TAKE 2	70%
NE 2	3	DRIVER	REFLECTIONS	GT INTERACTIVE	83%
1	4	COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN	WESTWOOD	EA	90%
NE 4	5	ROGUE SPEAR	RED STORM	TAKE 2	86%
NE 5	6	HOMEWORLD	RELIC	SIERRA	94%
NE 6	7	X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER	EGOSOFT	THQ	90%
2	8	SYSTEM SHOCK 2	LOOKING GLASS	EA	95%
8	9	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3	SPORTS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS	93%
7	10	ALIENS VS PREDATOR	REBELLION	FOX INTERACTIVE	91%
5	10	HIDDEN & DANGEROUS	ILLUSION SOFTWARE	TAKE 2	91%

THE ChartTrack TOP 10



THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Well it looks like *GTA 2* is shaking a big stick at *Tiberian Sun*, but I wonder if that's because there's still nothing else remotely decent to buy? I mean, I saw the latest 'fad' in PC World today from Hasbro, *E-mail Battleships*. You what? Nah, I must be dreaming. Pinch, pinch..."

Marc Spillman, Leeds

"After the bug-fest that was *Hidden & Dangerous*, *Rogue Spear* is now 'best tactical shoot 'em up on the planet'. The multiplayer game is such a beautiful thing I've stopped playing *Tiberian Sun*. I thought I would play it forever, but now it's just gathering dust."

Mark Smith, London

"Surely my eyes deceive me. Where has *System Shock 2* got to? The best game of the year, without doubt, and deserves to stay around for at least three months, but instead we have *Norton AntiVirus*, and the ancient *MS Flight Sim 98*... Has the world gone mad?"

The Frew, Middlesbrough

"How the hell did *Norton AntiVirus* get in there? And what happened to *System Shock 2*? – one of the best games ever. Gamers are just after a quick fix these days, it seems."

Pitbull, Glasgow

"Well, it looks like PR, hype and advertising has won the day (again) with *Tiberian Sun* still up at number one. Sure, it's an OK game, but it's just not got the perfect balance of *StarCraft* or flair of *Homeworld*. Perhaps one day people will start buying games based on content, not press releases and two-page adverts."

Jigga, St Albans

CHART COMMENT

BASED ON CHART TRACK TOP 10

Not out in time to do so here, but *Age Of Empires II* recently swiped *Tiberian Sun* off the US top spot, not before time either. If all goes to plan, next month should finally see the mighty Westwood topple from their perch under the assault of a great many games. Who will then be king of the hill is another matter.

Unreal Tournament, *Championship Manager 1999/2000*, *Quake III Arena*, *Tomb Raider IV* and *Age II* will all be fighting for the throne.

This month we see an odd chart: six new entries – one of which isn't a game at all – and a re-entry – Microsoft's *Flight Sim 98*, no doubt given a discount before the sequel's released next month. I'm pleased to see *X* hovering in the charts; it's great to see a good quality, unhyped game doing well.

Ricbie Shoemaker

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 *Dune 2000* (Virgin)
- 2 *Colin McRae Rally* (Codemasters)
- 3 *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* (Eidos)
- 4 *FA Premier League Football Manager* (EA Sports)
- 5 *Theme Hospital* (EA Classics)

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Microsoft Flight Sim 98* (Microsoft)
- 2 *C&C Red Alert: The Aftermath* (Virgin)
- 3 *Dark Forces 2* (Virgin)
- 4 *Total Annihilation* (GT Interactive)
- 5 *Theme Park* (EA)

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Doom 2* (Virgin)
- 2 *Sim City 2000* (Mindscape)
- 3 *Colonization* (Microprose)
- 4 *TIE Fighter* (Virgin)
- 5 *Krusty's Super Fun House* (Virgin)

COMPETITION

WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

PC ZONE and Virgin have teamed up to give you the chance to win every game in the current Top 10. All you have to do is enter the draw by answering this simple question:

Question: What does DMA stand for?

Just answer the above question and send it on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below

- Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18
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Answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (CPCZ913B), Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford BD1 5RZ Closing date: Friday 17 Dec

• Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Ed's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. Capisce?

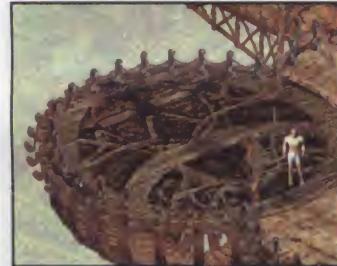
FULL STEAM AHEAD

Enter the weird Victorian world of Troika's *Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura*



With two *Fallout* games behind them, Troika really know their stuff.

“As well as a co-operative game, players will be able to take on other player-controlled parties”



Grown men running about in their underpants. It shouldn't be allowed.



A curious blend of spell-casting and arcane magic.

Troika, the newly-named team behind Interplay's two *Fallout* RPGs, are working on *Arcanum: Of Steamworks & Magick Obscura*, an RPG set in a world filled with fantasy magic and 19th century technology.

The world of *Arcanum* is a classless one, at least in gaming terms. Instead of choosing player classes, you'll be able to spend points on attributes. Each character will have over 20 stats, with more than 160 skills and spells that can be developed. The choice will be available to keep stats hidden, if you prefer to focus on the action, and the plot will be such that there will be multiple routes to victory, with hundreds of sub-quests throughout the game. Combat can either be turn-based or real-time, and the multiplayer game will not only include a co-operative game, but players will also be able to pit their wits against other player-controlled parties.

Sierra will be releasing *Arcanum* late next year.



Arcanum: now that's magick.



• New dribbling setup option allows you to really be in control of the ball



• Highly addictive multi-player mode



• Pitch surfaces that affects both ball dynamics and gameplay



• Improved 3D engine supporting up to 1600x1200 in both 3dfx and software

£10 OFF* TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

*Normal high street price

Will it be Lara's last adventure? Will it hell! She'll be back next year for sure, probably with big saggy udders down to her knees and folds of billowing skin rippling behind her as she shows off some fancy new moves. That's what happens, you know. When you get old. Look what happened to Gary Glitter.

So before she starts reliving past glories and looking sad, it might be time to try out Lara's fourth adventure before her implants start leaking and while she's still in her prime, so to speak.

The Last Revelation, reviewed last issue if you remember, sees our buxom heroine go back to

basics: small, tight levels, brain-teasing puzzles and dark, damp tombs characterise *The Last Revelation* – and it's all the better for it. The best *Tomb Raider* yet, in fact. Also the cheapest *Tomb Raider* game, at least if you take advantage of our special offer.

All you need part with is £24.99. Just call the Gameplay sales hotline on 0870 444 0888, wipe clean your copy of *PC ZONE* (just in case they quiz you on it) and mumble incoherently down the receiver. You know, like when you call your bank manager.



She was young once.



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TIDON

TOTALLY CONVERTED

Phil Wand looks at some very promising *Half-Life* TCs in development

Think of an entirely new game shaped around an existing software engine – in this case, Valve's splendid *Half-Life*. Picture it as it 'borrows' core intelligence routines, graphics functions and various other thingamajigs from deep inside the original code. See it substituting old weapons, weapon effects, enemies, enemy and player models, sounds and textures for shiny new ones. Finally, a new interface with touch-me buttons and cute swooshing noises. What you've imagined is a Total Conversion, or TC.

Those of you with copies of *Half-Life* should already be familiar with *Team Fortress Classic*, now outranking *Quake* as the top multiplayer game of the moment, and with other custom games such as *Counterstrike*. What you may not understand is the sheer hard work required to get these conversions off the ground. It's one thing to bash together a new deathmatch level, it's another to revise and repackage all the elements within it.

Most TC designers have to have an in-depth knowledge of packages such as Kinetix's *3D Studio Max*, as animator/modeller packages are required to create new player and enemy models. They'll also need to be intimate with the programming language C, as it was used to write the *Half-Life* software development kit (SDK). And of course, they'll need a good idea in the first place...

Nasty-looking chap from
The Sherman Project at
www.planethalf-life.com.



From the makers of *Redemption* (on this month's CD) comes *Wanted!* for *Half-Life*.



CONVERSION THERAPY

Various places out on the web list well over 50 *Half-Life* TCs currently in development, but roughly two in every three we visited either hadn't updated their pages since the summer holidays, or had simply disappeared into the ether altogether. Here we've picked some better looking examples that are still heading towards completion early next year

CHEMICAL EXISTENCE

www.redgenesis.com



Single and multiplayer. Best described as mutated *Kingpin* for *Half-Life*, this conversion sees you fighting your way through ghettos, getting through China Town and avoiding gangs in the deadly sewers beneath the city. Fourteen unique and detailed levels are planned.

CONTRACT KILLER

ckiller.valeworld.com



Single and multiplayer. Play the part of an assassin for hire – you're given background information on targets and must then wipe them out. Weaponry will range from stealthy to excessive. The more money you get, the better the weapons you can afford.



FIREARMS TC

www.planethalflife.com/FireArms

Single and multiplayer. New items, new player models, new class and menu system allowing players to buy armour, items and weapons with credits. You play the role of Ezekiel Sawyer, a professional soldier with many years of experience.



GUNMAN

gunman.telefragged.com

Single and multiplayer. Gunman looks really spesh, bookmark this site now. Features four unexplored

planets with countless new textures and architecture. Alien and human bad asses. Configurable weapons allow you to adjust your firepower depending on the situation. Original effects and soundtrack.



OPERATION URBAN ASSAULT

opua.telefragged.com

Single and multiplayer. These guys *really* know their graphics. Play the part of a member of a secret police strike force, codenamed Project Blue Razor. You and your fellow Blue Razors must punish the guilty with extreme prejudice, but still must take care to protect the innocent. Definitely one to look out for.



STARCRAFT

www.cheat-heaven.com/sctc

Single and multiplayer. Blizzard meets H R Giger. Neat. Introduces three new groups, each with between five and ten new classes. The authors hope to include a gas and minerals resources system similar to Blizzard's original *StarCraft*, upon which the conversion is based.



THE FUGITIVE

www.planethalflife.com/fugitive

Single player. It's like *Half-Life*. But kind of not. See? You are Taylor Ares, a soldier being used as a human guinea pig. The sound of troops entering the facility and scientists screaming in panic creates an opportunity for your escape. Haven't we been here before?



WAR IN EUROPE

www.planethalflife.com/borderline/mods/wie

Multiplayer. Here you can invade Poland and stuff. Choose from either the Axis or Allies and select a primary weapon. In order to obtain higher level weapons, players must achieve a certain level of frags. Other features include a promotion/demotion system.





GRAPHICS



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SCRUM DOWN

EA take the plunge and expose odd-shaped balls

Out next March from EA Sports is the long-awaited *Rugby 2000*, the first rugby game to hit the PC – since *Jonah Lomu Rugby* was released over two years ago. Featuring 20 of the world's top teams and over 600 players, the game – developed down under – aims to bring the accessibility and graphical loveliness of EA's *FIFA* series to the sport favoured by public schoolboys and management consultants. We are promised a fast-paced game, rich with leg-snapping tackles and realistically modelled players. Bill McLaren and Jamie Salmon will be on hand to provide witty commentary, with team strategies provided by England coach Clive Woodward. And in addition to friendly games, players will be able to take part in the full 1999 Rugby World Cup, as well as a number of other tournaments from across the globe.



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CHEATMASTER (Illustration of a man in a black suit and sunglasses holding a paintbrush)

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Fiel Doom
Fiel Fantasy VII
Flight Sim '98
Flight Unlimited 2
Formula 1
Formula One Grand Prix
Forsaken
Full Throttle

G-K

Gangsters
G-Police
Grand Theft Auto & London 1969
Grand Touring
Half Life
Herder
Heretic
Heroes of Might and Magic I & II
Hexen 1 & 2
Hi Octane
Hidden and Dangerous
Incoming
Indiana Jones & The Fate of Atlantis
Indyapolis
Interstate 76 and Nitro Pack
Iwar
Jedi Knight
Jurassic Park
Kingpin
Klingon Honor Guard

L-P

Lego Island
Lemmings 2: The Tribes
Little Big Adventure 2
Lords of Magic: Special Edition
Madden NFL '98
Master of Orion 1 & 2
MOK
MechCommander
MechWarrior 2
Men in Black
Midtown Madness
Monopoly
Monster Truck Madness 2
Monty Python: Quest for the Holy Grail
Mortal Kombat 3 & 4
Moto Racer
Motorhead
Myst 2: Spooklighter
Myst: The Fallen Lords
NBA Live '95, '96 & '97
Need for Speed 2 & 3
NHL '97, '98 & '99
NHL Breakaway '98
Nightmare Creatures
Nuclear Strike
Orintest
Outrun
Pandemonium
Pitfall
Police Quest: SWAT 2
Populous
Populus: The Beginning
Premier Manager 1, 3 & '99
Pro Pinball

Q-U

Quake and Quake 2
Railroad Tycoon 1 & 2
Rainbow Islands
Rainbow Six

Virtual Springfield
VR Powerboat Racing
War Games: Defcon 1
Warcraft & Warcraft 2
Wargasm
Warhammer: Dark Omen
Warzone 2100
Wing Commander IV
Wipeout & Wipeout XI
Wolfenstein 3D
World Cup '98
Worms, Worms 2 and
Armageddon
WWF Wrestlemania
X-Wing
X-COM: Apocalypse
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GAMES FOR FREE

Marble Crazy: four hands on one keyboard – cramped, yes, but an awful lot of fun

MARBLE CRAZY

Best described as a deranged marriage of *Tetris*, *Bubble Trouble* and a large vat of methadone, Neil Millstone's *Marble Crazy* is a madly addictive game of logic, skill, and shouting. The idea's really simple: arrange swirling, kaleidoscopic marbles into groups of three, thus removing them from your board with a satisfying 'pop'. The fun bit is that for every three you burst, one travels across to your opponent's board, giving them more marbles to deal with – but less room in which to move them about.

Popping larger blocks of four or five means your rival starts to drown under an ocean of psychedelic baubles. Get two or three rows to go on the trot and you'll trigger a flood of junk that constipates your neighbour's side of the screen and eventually causes them to forfeit the game. And that's where the shouting comes in.

Knowing precisely where to shift your marbles for maximum impact is an almost impossible art, and is one of the prime reasons it's all so addictive. The absolute simplicity of *Tetris* can often be wearing; the underlying complexity of *Marble Crazy* keeps sucking you in for more. You'll curse the game for being so utterly baffling, but you'll love it to bits nonetheless. Don't ask why, you just will. Okay?

As with many of the games we've dug out here, the quality of workmanship is simply astonishing. Despite the fact that it's



Marble Crazy: it's got marbles. And it's crazy.

being given away for nowt by a 19-year-old web programmer, there's nothing to suggest that it hasn't come direct from a commercial software house or the shelves of Electronics Boutique. Everything feels solid and professional, from the installation and online help through to the slick visuals and sounds.

So hey – what are you waiting for? Go and download it now before Mr Millstone decides to charge people for the privilege.

www.millstone.demon.co.uk

CAPMAN

If you thought the original *Pac Man* had a serious eating disorder, give *Capman* a blast. The game is a lustrous update of the Midway original, and includes support for up to four players via network, modem, serial cable or sat at the same keyboard – that's a lot of eating going on. But if the

'munch, munch, munch' concept turns you sleepy, the addition of other players will make it fun all over again. When playing against other people, you can choose either deathmatch or 'eatmatch' modes, both of which are worthy variations.

Quality is second to none, and with the game swallowing less than 5Mb of your hard drive, we reckon it'll be one of those little multiplayer goodies that'll remain on your machine from now until eternity.

batman.jytof.fi/~janimm/capman

TREMOR GOLD

Were we to invite you over for a 2D, top-down, four-player deathmatch version of *Quake*, you'd probably think we were one tree short of a hammock. But here it is – and by gum, it's really quite good. If you know anyone elderly enough to remember *Gauntlet* from the seafront arcades, and if you can shut them up reminiscing over 10p coin ops for more than a second, you just might make their year with *Tremor Gold*. Extremely violent and remarkably bloody, four players can crowd around one monitor and jostle for room on the keyboard.

www.btinternet.com/~m.pay

JUMP 'N BUMP

Monster fun for up to four on the same machine, *Jump 'N Bump* is one of those childishly simple ideas that'll have you howling and whooping like you'd never played a computer game before. Guide your mad bunny around countless different levels, making every effort to squish your opponents by jumping on their heads. It's fast, unbelievably fun and really quite violent. Blood and guts from dead bunnies run all over the landscape, with an accompanying 'gloop, gloop' noise. Emailware from a team of mad Swedes – send them a message if you like it. We did.

www.brainchilddesign.com

WHAT'S ON AT GAMEPLAY

GAMING GIRLIES The hunt is on to find the country's best female fragger. Details of the nationwide competition are still a little sketchy, but stay tuned to the Wireplay website to read the updates as they arrive.

ALIEN VS PREDATOR

The new Wireplay *Alien vs Predator* site has recently gone live at clubs.wireplay.co.uk/avclub. Featuring the usual array of clans, leagues, messages and helpful information, *AvP* fans should make a bookmark now.

TOP GAME *Half-Life* is still topping the popularity charts, with *Air Attack* and *Quake* following on. *Unreal Tournament* has just made its first appearance, and it'll be interesting to see how things progress.

Wireplay
now at
gameplay.com



gameplay.com
we're never beaten

Online Diary is sponsored
by BT Gameplay

GO HERE NOW

DR GOO

As well as being host to the mighty fine *Dr Goo* series of freeware games, the Dr Goo main site also contains links to a variety of other top-notch software by the same author.

drgoo.8m.com



Dr Goo: Cute graphics, cute gameplay. Suck it and see.

seems to be profound violence towards woodland creatures: take *Chicken 2*, where you eradicate fowl with what appears to be a shoulder-mounted howitzer. Pacifists need not apply.

www.brainchilddesign.com

CONMEG SPIELART

Even though they came second in the last

war, the Germans as a whole are an efficient bunch, and sausage-munching programmers

Conmeg Spielart are no exception. They are a group of PC games designers from the Fatherland, whose titles

include *Bubble Trouble 97* (a super glossy rewrite of the old favourite) and the frantic *Panzer Trouble*.

www.conmeg.de

NEK

Netris Kombat is the most radical update yet of the original Russian puzzle game. It features no fewer than 32 different weapons and defences, meaning there's more action in this puzzle game than in most arcade shooters. Most important are the array of multiplayer options, including full support for Internet games via the Mplayer and MPG-NET online networks.

www.netriskombat.com



How football should be played.



Now you can zoom in and out.

THE SENSIBLE APPROACH

We reviewed a little football game by the name of *Total Soccer* last summer and next to EA's *FIFA* series it was hardly the most attractive game. Top-down, fast-paced action was the order of the day, incorporating a style of gameplay reminiscent of the old *Kick Off* and *Sensible Soccer* series – specifically the ball didn't stick to the feet. *Total Soccer 2000* from Iridon, again picks up the same style of gameplay (now with the option to glue the ball to your toes if you so desire), this time offering 200 teams from 11 world leagues, including international sides. We've actually been toying with the demo that was released recently and we should have a review in the coming months. Check out <http://iridon.com> for more details (while you're there, why not download the full free version of *Dink Smallwood*).

SHORTS

GUN FISHING

Piranha: Attack Sub Prototype is an underwater rendition of the *Wing Commander* style of gameplay currently under development at Reakkor Media. As part of a futuristic UN Navy protecting underwater colonies from pirate attack, the game offers 28 non-linear missions and a range of subaqueous vehicles to pilot through the world's oceans. No release date or publisher has yet been announced at this time.



ARMY AIRMEN

No sooner is a third *Army Men* game upon us than 3D Studios announce a fourth, *Army Men: Air Attack*. The isometric view has been dumped in favour of a third-person 3D view, as players fly a choice of four choppers over 22 missions across six 'worlds' to destroy the tan army once again. Unfortunately, we have no details of a release date. Do you care? Thought not.



Should push your new 3D card to its limits.

ROLLCAGE RETURNS

Tiring of the usual race-car-around-track formula, Attention To Detail have added no less than 16 game modes to their forthcoming race sequel *Rollcage: Stage II*. As well as the usual championship modes, the game will include a multiplayer Destruction Derby, 25 wide-open Scramble stages, Training, and a Survivor mode. Graphically ATD will be taking full advantage of new graphics card features, specifically environmental bump mapping, to provide dazzling effects on your next-generation graphics accelerators. All being well, GT Interactive will be releasing the game next February.

PULLING THE TRIGGER IS THE EASY OPTION

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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...

Our monthly look at the games that should have been here by now, but have slipped



The mighty LucasArts' *Empire Strikes Back*.

STAR WARS: FORCE COMMANDER (LucasArts)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #64

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: Winter '98

Apparently the final game to be based on the 'classic' *Star Wars* trilogy, *Force Commander* was announced way back when PC ZONE looked entirely different and cost a lot more (it was still worth it, though). Our last meeting with *Force Commander*, however, was back in May, when LucasArts were keener to push *The Phantom Menace* and *Episode I: Racer* down our throats. Then it was looking decidedly ropey, with all manner of graphical horrors leaking across the screen. Which is probably why the Californian developers have hidden the code away and put their stormtroopers to work on it full-time. With nearly a full year between our last encounter with the game and its release next year, we are sure *Force Commander* will live up to expectations. A new hope indeed.

NOW OUT Winter/Spring 2000

SHOGUN: TOTAL WAR (EA)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #75

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: May '99

EA were kind enough to include a rolling demo of *Shogun* with some copies of *C&C: Tiberian Sun*. If you were one of the lucky ones, then you will no doubt be salivating already at the 3D graphics, the thousands of troops running across the screen and the in-depth resource management. We reckon it could be one of the best real-time strategy games to emerge next year, certainly the most epic. Unfortunately we have a few months to wait, but we will be previewing the game very soon.

NOW OUT Spring 2000



That game with the <beep>s in.

HYPE - THE TIME QUEST (Ubi Soft)

LAST SEEN: PCZ #70

ORIGINAL RELEASE DATE: Winter '98

There are two types of people in the world: those who had a PlayMobil fort and those who wanted one. Unfortunately you won't be getting one with *Hype*, seeing as it's based in the realms of PlayMobil fantasy. The good news is that Ubi Soft will eventually release a series of games across the entire PlayMobil range, which is why this particular game has been a long time coming (it all comes down to licensing, basically). However, we will have a review next issue.

NOW OUT December '99



The kids'll love it.

ELITE IN TOP GEAR

Remember Elite Systems? Here's a clue: they released *Airwolf* on the old 8-bit computers. They also released *Grand Touring* on the PC last year, which wasn't that hot. Still, *Ford Racing* looks a lot better, so much so in fact, that the mighty automobile company of the same name are having their logo, their cars and their FIA Rally team crowbarred into the game. For Ford's sake it had better be good.

Rather than rehash the formula worn thin by a fleet of racing games recently, *Ford Racing* attempts to capture the feel of *Gran Turismo*, meaning that by winning races players can accumulate kudos and cash to upgrade their cars, buy a shiny new model or race for a different team. Twelve Ford cars will be in the game, from the Taurus to the GT90, as well as some concept designs, all of which can be raced across 10 circuits. Expect to be able to test drive *Ford Racing* early next year.



Get your driving gear on, jump into your Ford and get ready for action.



Five racing modes are promised.



There'll be over 80 AI-controlled drivers.

TZAR

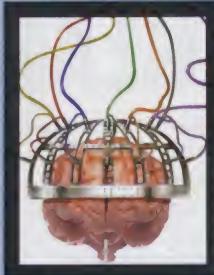
Out at the end of November, through Zablac, comes *Tzar: The Burden Of The Crown*, a real-time strategy game of resource gathering and conquest in a medieval world of magic. Three civilisations will be on offer - European, Asian and Arabian - with no less than eight different resources to collect and manage. Each race will have 25 different units, with a further 25 buildings available to construct. Winning won't just be about defeating your opponents in combat, players will be able to succeed by successfully building up their economy, or by converting the enemy by religion or magic. Diplomacy, espionage and trade will all play an important part in the game, as will research. Units will also gain experience throughout the game, adding quite a considerable RPG element to the game.



'Brass monkey' weather effects.



Battles won't take place solely on land.



TECHHEAD

DirectX 7 is out of the pits, while PlayStation2 prepares for a showdown in Japan

★ SWEATING IT OUT Carlos Ruiz

DIRECT EXPLOSION

Microsoft have finished and released DirectX 7.0

If you constantly play the latest titles, there's an excellent chance the brand new and polished DirectX 7.0 will already be residing on your hard drive. At any rate, you'll have one version of it – maybe DX5.2, or DX6.1. But are you actually aware of what it is? It's one of the most important and influential pieces of games-related software on your system, that's what...

Created by Microsoft, DirectX is a collection of multimedia API (application programming interface) drivers that makes everyone's lives a whole lot easier. For developers, it allows a single set of instructions to cater for a single type of hardware – for example, a game designed to work with Direct3D will run with bountiful graphics whatever 3D card you have (Voodoo2, G400, TNT, Savage4, etc). This eliminates the need for hardware-specific code (think of 3dfx's native Glide API, which is now more or less obsolete as a result).

For us, the dead-beat gamers, there are less compatibility issues as a result. And with each new update of DirectX, you can rest assured that all the features of your latest toys will be supported for those nice developers to implement in your favourite titles. As the code gets improved and refined even further, you'll also see speed increases and increased stability when running games.

In DX7, the main improvements are on the Direct3D side. With the advent of the next generation of graphics cards, there are even more visual effects and hardware features to be included – such as Transformation & Lighting acceleration, found in the new GeForce 256 and Savage2000 cards.

There are a bunch of other cool graphical effects in there as well: Cube Environment Mapping, Vertex Blending, Projective Textures – and don't worry about what they



Monolith's LithTech 2.0 engine will make full use of DirectX 7 and the enhanced features in Direct 3D

mean, just remember that as you upgrade to a new graphics card, certain games will automatically spruce themselves up with these effects.

As for DirectSound, support has been added for several effects found in Creative Labs' EAX (Environmental Audio Extensions) 3D positional audio API. This may be the first step in reaching a universal standard in 3D positional sound, stamping out the rivalry between Creative's EAX and Aureal's Vortex2/A3D.

DirectMusic is now available for support in hardware, providing your sound card is up to it, allowing richer and more complex musical soundtracks. Direct Input has been updated to cater for all four buttons, as well as the wheel that exists on Microsoft's new Intellimouse Explorer, making the laser-sighted rodent the undisputed gamer's mouse.

So you see, Microsoft aren't so bad after all. Any game needing DX7 will have it included on the CD, but if you can't wait, you can download it from this web address: www.microsoft.com/directx/homeuser/downloads/

FACTCANNON

Any audiophile will tell you the best speakers to own are those that are proper hi-fi equipment because PC equivalents are usually quite tame in comparison. VideoLogic (www.videologic.com) would agree, and have set out to bring professional studio-quality sound to hardcore gamers. The Sirocco Crossfire kit comprises four satellite speakers (ideal for 3D positional audio), one hefty active subwoofer, and a powerful amplifier to drive them up the wall. Sound quality? Impressive. The satellites are top-notch and the sub holds the bass line extremely well. This system is loud, black, and worthy of your £249.



DVD is not exactly making leaps and bounds at the moment, but it is destined for greatness, nonetheless. So if you feel the need to prolong the life of your PC, and watch the latest films in digital quality, what better place to look than Pioneer's 10x DVD drive? The ATAPI device also doubles up as a 40x CD-ROM, and is the fastest DVD solution out there at the moment. Have a gander at www.pioneerusa.com for the full spec.

If you can't get through the day without checking and sending email, you'll be pleased to know there is now another thing you can do with it. Ashpool Telecom have developed TaoTalk, a small piece of software that allows you to use your microphone to record a voice message, which can then be sent as email. The recipient(s) can then listen to your ramblings using their sound card and speakers, and nothing else – simple as that. And the best part is, TaoTalk is free to download from www.taotalk.com

PS2: HIT OR MISS?

The big guns come out as PlayStation2 opens fire on Dreamcast



PS2: console or pretentious hi-fi accessory? You decide.

Now that the Dreamcast has done quite an admirable job in building up a user base in Japan and the US, and is in the process of doing so here, it seems there's no better time for Sony to try and upset the balance.

After months of build-up, Sony has finally unveiled the design and specifications of PlayStation2 – due for release in Japan on the 4 March 2000. The European and US releases will be a couple of months later.

PS2 is a true powerhouse console. You've probably heard about its 128-bit

'Emotion Engine' CPU. The system core runs at a very fast 300MHz, and comes with 32MB of main RAM. It may seem like peanuts to PC owners, but it's a lot of muscle for a console.

Gran Turismo 2000, *Time Crisis 4* and *Tekken Tag Team* are all slated for release on the launch date, but they're done formulas. Dreamcast users are enjoying original titles such as *Power Stone* and *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*, so how will PS2 respond?

The power and capacity at hand might enable larger companies to use their

manpower and financial clout to produce games that overshadow offerings from smaller developers, both in terms of graphics and size. Also, PS2 is reportedly quite an unfriendly system to program for. If this proves to be a reality, we could see many third-party titles head towards the Dreamcast.

Since there are many top titles already on the way for Sega's console (*Shenmue*, *Soul Calibur*, and so on), Sony may have its work cut out. For full details of PlayStation2, point your browser to www.playstation-europe.com

SHORTS

TEAM 17 BREED ALIENS

After a year-and-a-half in development, Team 17 have announced a sequel to the Amiga classic *Alien Breed*. Released next Autumn, *Alien Breed: Conflict* will be a 3D real-time strategy game, in which you complete a series of behind-the-lines missions involving assassination, stealth, rescue and destruction. Characters will develop in RPG style with a wide range of weaponry to play around with.

WATCHING THE STORM



Red Storm's latest project is an *X-COM* style strategy game called *Shadow Watch*. With its comic-book style, the turn-based game has many RPG elements as players attempt a series of anti-terrorist missions across 20 maps. Unlike *X-COM*, it will have a simplified combat engine that should appeal to non-hardcore fans. It should be out next March.

THE NOCTURNE WITCH PROJECT

The *Blair Witch* is coming to PC



The Gathering Of Developers have announced they will be creating a game based on *The Blair Witch Project* – the horror flick doing the rounds at the moment.

We asked the only person who has had the time to see the film in the office, Charlie Brooker, what type of game we might expect: "A cross between *Thief: The Dark Project* and *Resident Evil*," he predicts. "It would be good to have a game where you never see what is after you, but if the screen jerks around like it does in the film, it could make a few people violently ill."

Haxan Films said: "We're thrilled to be working with GOD to create the next level of *The Blair Witch*

world. We were looking for a creative partner to take the story beyond a linear environment and to further the quest for real horror."

Out next summer, speculation points at a game based on Terminal Reality's *Nocturne* 3D engine. If you've seen the film, now you can read our review on page 82.

Mark Randel, *Nocturne*'s lead programmer said: "Both the game and the movie take advantage of environmental effects and eerie cinematography – they tap into human emotion so effectively they evoke a realistically disturbing experience." Quite.

More details will be unleashed as and when they surface.



Imagine these...
...in this.



MACHINE GUN NEST

SNIPER VANTAGE POINT

INFANTRY HIDING PLACE

ANTI TANK GUN

TRANQUIL OR TREACHEROUS?

TO A CIVILIAN, IT'S A PICTURESQUE FRENCH VILLAGE.
TO A WWII TANK COMMANDER IT'S A POTENTIAL DEATHTRAP.



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**PANZER
ELITE**
THINK TANK

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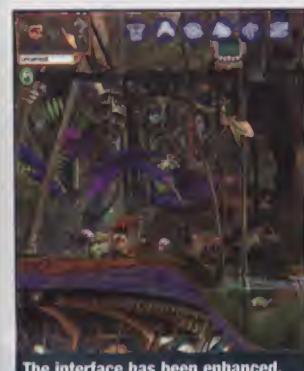
we're never beaten



Creatures 3 is essentially a tamagotchi-style game on a huge scale.



Go forth and multiply.



The interface has been enhanced.



Not all environments are Norn-friendly.

NORNS IN SPACE

Out in December is *Creatures 3*, sequel to last year's best-selling artificial life game *Creatures 2*, obviously. Set a thousand years before the last game, *Creatures 3* is set aboard a 'vast living spaceship' containing its own various eco-systems from the Norn Terrarium, the Grendel-infested jungle and The Ettin Desert.

Once again players can mess about with breeding exotic animals and weird gadgets for them to play with. For the first time however, a social element will be introduced, with Norns interacting with one another and using player-created 'connecting agents' to construct machinery to hunt down the vicious Grendels. For the uninitiated, *Creatures 3* is basically a tamagotchi-style game on an epic scale. And if it's anything like the previous games, you'll be hooked for life.

**2000 BULLETS.
ONE TARGET.**

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It was a time for heroes...



CODENAME EAGLE

...The early 1900s. A parallel timeline. The Tsar's son Peter has launched a furious attack on his neighbours in a quest to expand the borders of the old Russian Empire. His savage war machine has already overthrown Europe and he is now poised on the brink of world domination.

Enter Shadow Command, a Secret Service formed by the members of the Alliance.

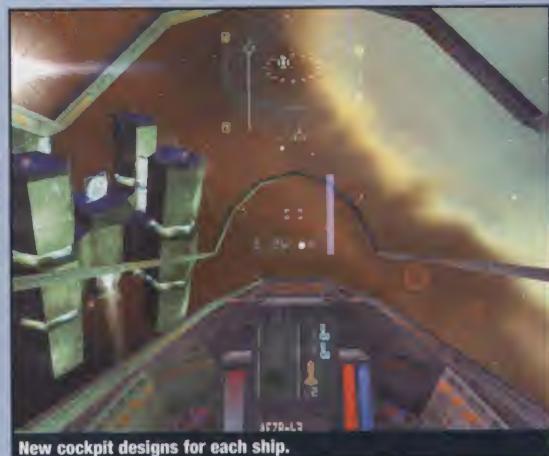
As Agent Red, you are about to enter a world consumed by war.

YOUR MISSION:
Destroy the Russian war machine

YOUR ORDERS:
Use whatever means necessary

YOUR CODENAME:
Eagle





New cockpit designs for each ship.

X-PANSION

German outfit Egosoft have released details on their *X - Beyond The Frontier* add-on. Snappily titled *X-Tension* (groan), it adds a number of new independent missions and a larger galaxy to fly about in. More significantly you can now fly new ships that you've either bought or captured, or relinquish control to an autopilot. Factories will also be able to be remotely controlled and the navigation system is getting a much-needed overhaul. Unfortunately we don't know when it'll come out, but the sooner the better.

OUR MOST WANTED

With most of the Christmas games either out or imminent, we now look to next year and the games we think are going to be the biggest and best. And we couldn't even fit in *WarCraft III*, there're that many!

- 1 **Duke Nukem Forever** (GT Interactive) March
- 2 **Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption** (Activision) February
- 3 **Black & White** (EA) March
- 4 **Team Fortress 2** (Sierra) Summer 2000
- 5 **Halo** (Take 2) Autumn 2000
- 6 **Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force** (Activision) Spring 2000
- 7 **Freelancer** (Microsoft) Winter 2000
- 8 **Star Wars: Episode I - Obi Wan** (Activision) Summer 2000
- 9 **C&C: Renegade** (EA) May
- 10 **XCOM Alliance** (Hasbro) Autumn 2000

TICKERTAPE

STARTS++ Already Zombie Studios have announced a third *Spec Ops* game, called *Spec Ops: Navy Seals*. Out next October, the game will use Monolith's LithTech 2.0 3D engine. An add-on for *Spec Ops: US Green Berets* is scheduled for early next year **++STOP++** We hear rumours that iD Software are working on *Doom 2000*, which is nice **++STOP++** Infogrames have bought up the rights to produce a game based on the cartoon series *Wacky Races* **++STOP++** Shiny have announced more details on *Sacrifice*, their next project after *Messiah*, which we will label as a fantasy recycle 'em up. The aim, it seems, is to appease your gods by sacrificing yours and your foe's creatures **++STOP++** Finally Quantic Dream have let slip that a sequel to *The Nomad Soul* is already at the planning stage **++ENDS**



EF 2000: we may never see its like again.

A sequel to *F-22 Total Air War*: unlikely...

RIP DID

Infogrames' DID in total structural failure as staff parachute to Rage and Evolution

Last month DID (Digital Image Design), developers of *TFX, F-22: Total Air War* and *Wargasm*, became no more as a second wave of the workforce walked out - the first wave going to Evolution Studios, set up by ex-DID boss Martin Kenwright and ex-Psygnosis head and Sony favourite, Ian Hetherington. Rage Software (*Expendable, Incoming*) have since bought what's left of the DID team from Infogrames, changed their name to Rage Warrington (sounds like a chisel-jawed hero Kurt Russell would play), and set them to work on 'new genres'.

Rage are currently stepping up their console development, with an eye on PlayStation 2, Microsoft's X-Box and continuing work with Dreamcast. Basically DID are no more and it looks like any further ground-breaking military sims from the team are unlikely to appear, although a rallying game from Evolution studios was briefly shown to us at ECTS in September.

The Man who KNOWS

HAIL THE NEW PURITANS

The US violent games backlash continues, with **New York** lawmakers considering legislation to stiffen enforcement of labelling amid controversial US High School shootings, with numerous self-appointed experts voicing their opinions.

Dr Diane Schetky examined **Michael Carneal**, the **Kentucky** High School shooter, concluding: "As a child psychologist, I'm really troubled that the makers of these games are exploiting our children to make a big profit, with no social conscience or concern about what it's doing to a whole generation of kids. What happens is that some of these kids who aren't succeeding socially turn to video games. And they don't learn social skills. They aren't learning how to solve problems. Instead, there they are in front of a screen. I remember asking him if they were violent. He said it was pretty hard to find games that weren't violent. One of the problems with video games is that they objectify violence. The games don't reflect the after effects of real violence. There's been some suggestion that these games are increasing the effectiveness of kids who kill. Michael hit eight kids with eight shots."

The foremost proponent of this theory is **Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman**, a retired Army officer and psychology professor, who claims: "It takes three things to kill: a weapon, skill, and will. The video games give a lot of the skill and some of the will. It's not an easy thing to train soldiers to kill. In World War II, not many soldiers would do it. Michael Carneal, a 14-year-old boy who had never fired a handgun before, stole a pistol, fired a few practice shots the night before, and came into his school the next morning with the gun. In this case, eight shots were apparently fired for eight hits - four of them head shots, one neck, and three upper torso. This is simply astounding, unprecedented marksmanship. Nowhere in the annals of military or law enforcement or criminal history can any of us find an equivalent achievement, and this from a 14-year-old boy with no previous experience of firing a handgun."

Responding to claims that games taught Carneal to kill, **Kingpin** designer **Drew Markham** (now working on *Wolfenstein 2000*) blurted: "How do you even begin to rebut something as absurd as that? Here I am playing a video game, and you tell me that's going to translate to holding a real gun? You show me someone who says that and I'll show you someone who belongs to the Flat Earth Society."

Lara Croft has an album. **Female Icon** is a collaboration between long-forgotten Lara model, **Rhona Mitra**, and Eurythmic, **Dave Stewart**. Apparently, "the album combines his considerable musical skills with Rhona's sultry vocal style to bring about an album of ethereal quality. It was also - in true Lara Croft fashion - partly recorded on a boat travelling down the Amazon river!" I've heard it, and as usual, expect there to be plenty of copies available.

HOTSHOTS

There are five *Star Trek* games on the way but the one we're most excited about is the one featuring Jeri Ryan, obviously





STAR TREK: VOYAGER - ELITE FORCE

Activision • Out March 2000

Ever since iD Software released *Doom* there has been one software developer in particular that has made good use of their technology. From *Doom* Raven made *Heretic*, from *Quake* they gave us *Hexen II* and from *Quake II* we shall soon have *Soldier Of Fortune*. Now with *Quake III Arena* almost upon us, Raven have once again taken iD's unbeatable engine and made it their own. *Elite Force* is undoubtedly going to be one of the biggest games of the new millennium.

Along with being able to wander around parts of the ship the cast hasn't even seen, players will be beaming aboard Borg cubes and the ships of a number of other races - some of which are entirely new. You'll also be able to wander about in your magnetic boots on the outside of the ship, fire off nine different weapons and return home for a replicated cup of tea. Best of all, however, is the multiplayer game - only because you can kill Neelix without fear of a court martial. Nice.



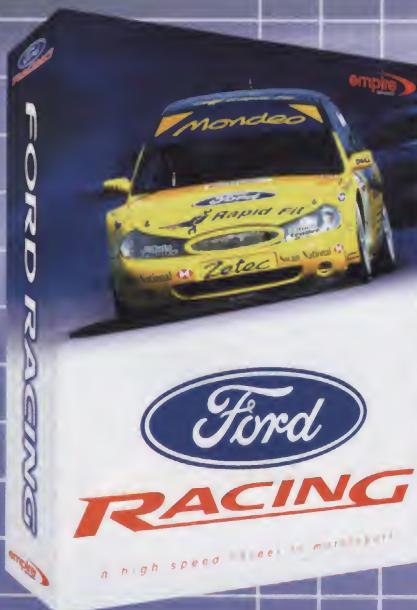


RACING

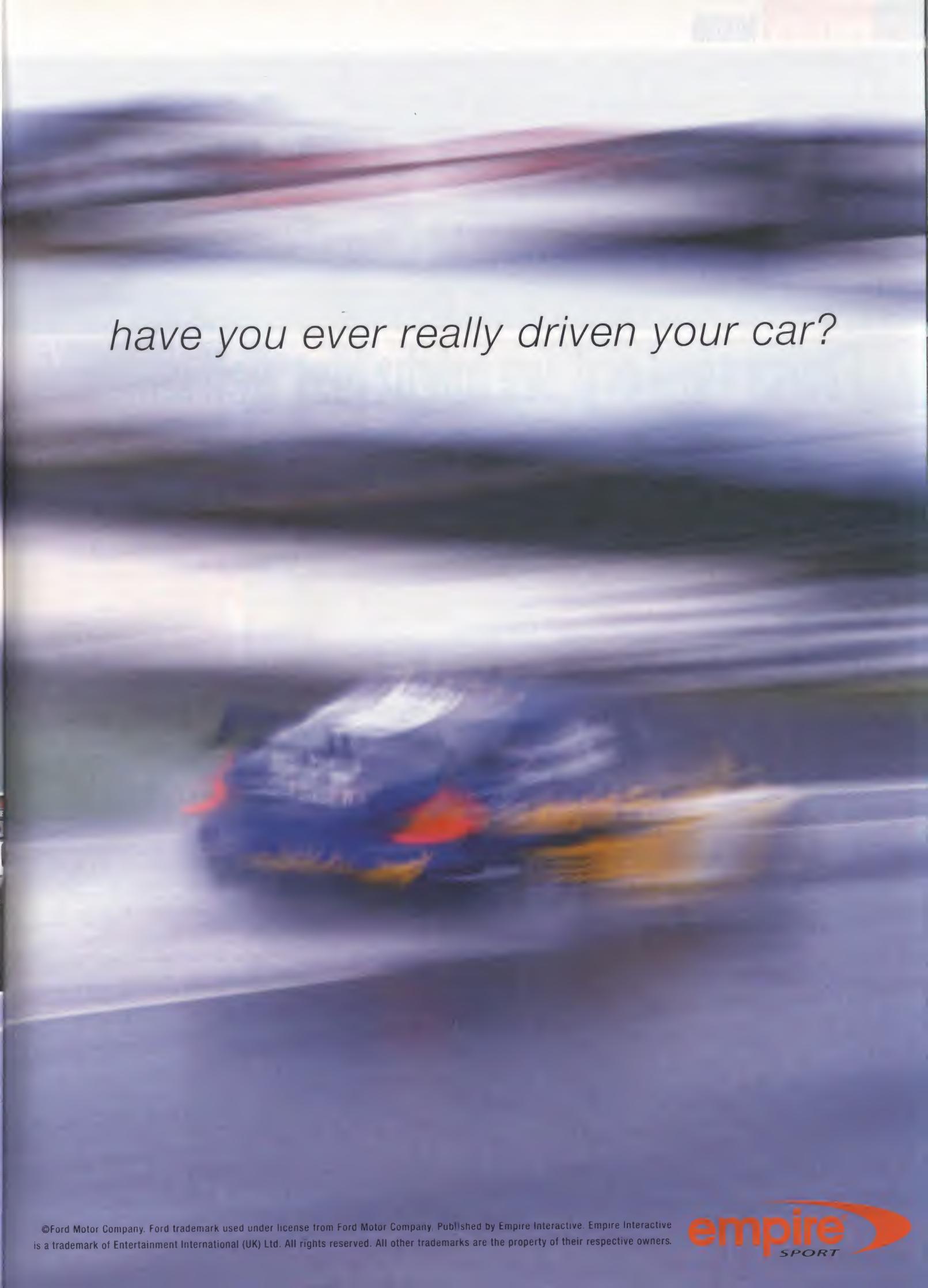
It's time to stop worrying about increased insurance premiums, stone chips and your less interesting Sunday morning rituals...

- Hi-res textures
- Rigid body dynamics
- Advanced AI
- Instant replays
- Multiple camera views
- 3 Championship styles

Extensive range of models available



PC CD-ROM



have you ever really driven your car?



You can beg all you like, I'm still blowing your head off.



Lots of pretty effects each time Bob possesses someone.



More pretty effects... and some swirling stuff.

Praise the Lord, we might just well see...

MESSIAH

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Shiny
PUBLISHER Virgin
WEBSITE www.shiny.com
OUT God knows (Geddit? Messiah?
 God knows... Hey?)

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

• Eons in development
 • It's like *Metal Gear Solid* with angels and that.
 • Weird possess 'em-up gameplay

The world has been waiting for just under 2000 years for the second coming of Christ. We've been waiting almost as long for Shiny's *Messiah*. Charlie Brooker expands

From the new Channel 5 series *When Babies Go Wrong*.



How long have we been waiting for *Messiah*? We've been waiting for so long, we actually forgot we were waiting at all. In some shadowy, dream-addled corner of our minds, part of us actually thought it'd already been released, played, and enjoyed, somewhere... somewhere in an alternate dimension.

After all, the game was originally unveiled over two years ago – and two years of gaming industry time is the equivalent of a hundred million years on Earth. Well, nearly. One thing's for sure: back then, *waaay* back then, early *Messiah* previews were enough to blow hardened gaming experts' socks off. We can clearly recall our very own Jeremy Wells, then *PC ZONE* editor, shaking his head with amazement, describing the sneak demo he'd been party to as "mucking incredible, absolutely mucking unbelievable". Except he didn't use the word "mucking", because he's a fully grown adult male with a fully grown adult male mouth.

We were promised mind-blowing 3D graphics (with or without the use of an accelerator card), complex gameplay, and what seemed like outrageously provocative content. You play a little cherub – it looks like a toddler – and you can possess anyone's body,

“More a thinking man's arcade game than a high-falutin' adventure epic, when we say it's like *Metal Gear Solid*, we aren't joking”

and then make them do anything you like! You can make them leap out of windows! You can shoot them in the legs and then possess them and force them to walk with broken shins! It's got prostitutes in it! Etcetera!

Now the funny thing is, before the protracted gestation period made us forget about *Messiah* altogether, we came to believe the game itself was going to be a kind of free-form adventure in which

you roamed about a gigantic city, taking control of more or less anyone who took your fancy. Well, a game of that description did arrive, but it wasn't

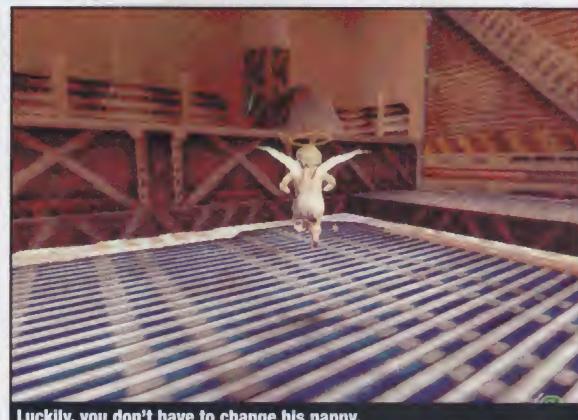
from Shiny and it wasn't called *Messiah*. It was Bowieladen body-hopping adventure game *The Nomad Soul*, which we reviewed favourably in *PCZ* #83. *Messiah* kept us waiting.

And, in the end, it caught us unawares: because at last, at long, long last, we've finally been handed some playable *Messiah* code and – get this – you know what it's like? It's like... it's like... well, it's a bit like *Metal Gear Solid*.

TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED

That's right. *Messiah* is more of a thinking man's arcade game than a high-falutin' adventure epic. When we say it's like *Metal Gear Solid*, we aren't bloody joking: it really is quite similar, y'know – a stealth-orientated arcade game if ever we saw one.

Like *Metal Gear* or, say,



Luckily, you don't have to change his nappy.

① Killing an innocent welder the *Messiah* way. One: take aim...

① ...Two: fire!



① 1 and 2 and 3 and stretch and 1 and 2 and 3 and stretch...

CV



SHINY

Shiny done the following...

- 1993 *Earthworm Jim* wows console owners the world over with its incredible blend of cartoonaric platform shenanigans and cow-related humour. Shiny lauded as the future of electronic entertainment.
- 1994 *Earthworm Jim II* arrives, as does a spin-off animated TV series.
- 1996 *MDK* appears on the PC. An inspired but faintly confusing mix of oddball 3D exploration, platform game and shoot-em-up, it does less business than expected.
- 1998 Shiny release *Wild 9* on the PlayStation. It is poo.
- 1999? Will their *Messiah* arrive in time for the millennium? Let's hope so...

Grand Theft Auto, it's a surprisingly tight, old-skool game in many respects. Your aim in each section is fairly straightforward, even if the means of achieving it aren't. Writing clear, direct gameplay is as hard (and as vital) as writing a clear, direct plot, so initial signs are promising.

At the time of writing, *Messiah*'s projected November release date seems more than a little unlikely, given the unfinished state of the code we've played – it's got more rough edges than a masochist's loo seat. Half the characters and levels are missing, the bugs are there for all to see, and crash-wise, it's as stable as Christopher Reeve on a cakewalk. But going by what is playable, this is still an impressive prospect.

Normal it ain't, though. Shiny don't do normal. Check out their track record: *Earthworm Jim*, *MDK*... um... *Wild 9* on the PlayStation. How normal were they? Answer: not very. And *Messiah* is no exception.

You play a lickle cherub, named Bob. Your quest: to save the world. How are you going to do that? Don't ask us. Something to do



When not 'inside' another's body, Bob's highly vulnerable.



There must be an angel... standing on my crate...

Here, aren't you that Boba Fett, off of *Star Wars*? →



Q&A

JAY NIELSEN



Jay Nielsen, 23, line-producer for Messiah, discusses life, the universe and childhood headlocks

PCZ What was the last game you paid money for?

JAY Paid for?!

PCZ What's your favourite game of all time?

JAY Ultima IV – I skipped school for a week to play that game!

PCZ Given limitless time and money, what game would you like to create?

JAY An online god game.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight? If so, what happened?

JAY Yes. The other kid grabbed me in a headlock and I proceeded to bash him in the head with my fist. He eventually let go. Not very glamorous.

PCZ Abba once sang "I believe in angels". Do you?

JAY Anyone can believe in angels after a few drinks.

PCZ Name a truly awful record of the Eighties.

JAY During the Eighties? Considering I was only 5 in 1980 that's a tough one.



with killing Satan. Doesn't really matter: like most games, it's really just a question of getting from A to B by whatever means necessary.

To whit: the game is split into separate levels, each of which is in turn divided into a series of areas or rooms; passing through each of these is a step-by-step process. You can't just toddle about, because people will try to shoot you (no-one reacts favourably to being surprised by a two-foot cherub, especially the police). Plus, divine you may be, immortal you ain't: as cherubic Bob you're incredibly vulnerable to gunshot wounds and the like.

So what to do? Well, fortunately, Bob's got a very special talent. Presumably, he went to public school,

because he's adept at sneaking up behind people and forcibly entering their bodies, har har har. We're talking, of course, about possession, which in *Messiah* is represented by a

some fascinating and highly original gameplay.

Y'see, there are two main tactics for possession. If you're feeling macho, you can go for broke – run

“Bob's got a very special talent. Presumably, he went to public school, because he's adept at sneaking up behind people and forcibly entering their bodies, har har har. We're talking, of course, about possession”

visually impressive trick wherein the character you're taking over wobbles and judders, like a plastic soldier in a microwave, as Bob vanishes inside their spine. It's the only way to succeed in the game – and the range of possibilities it opens up leads to

into the centre of the room, take control of the guy with the biggest gun, and go shooty-bang crazy until there's no-one else left standing. Or you could take the subtle, considered approach – stalking your prey, leaping from body to body at opportune

moments, keeping your head down as you go.

And, if you're feeling nasty, then yes: you really can shoot someone in the legs – at which point they usually fall to their knees, begging for mercy – and then possess them and force them to crawl around using their shattered limbs for support. It doesn't appear to serve any particular purpose, but hey – it's a USP: Unique Selling Point, right?

Unpleasantness aside, there's the question of *who* you possess. It's best to pick someone useful. Cops have guns, but are also under threat from any criminals (known as 'Chots' in *Messiah*-world, for some mad reason) who happen to be standing around. Likewise, taking

From the new Channel 5 series *When Babies Get Shot*.From the new Channel 5 series *When Kneecaps Explode*.

Fancy meeting a nice angel like you in a sewer like this.



Duch, said Barney, as his mind spewed out of his head like volcanic lava.

THERE MUST BE AN ANGEL PLAYING ON MY SCREEN

Religion isn't a subject most games publishers would dare fool around with, but some have risked the bible-bashers' wrath – and others actually specialise in producing games for God-botherers

Messiah isn't the only game to toy with religious iconography – although ones that do are a very rare breed. In fact you can count the number of publishers willing to risk upsetting the American bible belt on the fingers of one gnarled godless hand. For instance, Electronic Arts are unlikely to jeopardise potential sales of *NHL 2000* by including a bonus stage in which you chase Christ down a cobbled street wielding a lasso... to give but one, unnecessarily peculiar example.

Still, a few games have included a bit of religio-action, and turned out none the worse for wear. The recent (and, in our modest opinion, unjustly overlooked) first-person shooter *Requiem* (PCZ #77, 89%) cast you, yes you, as a pistol-packin' angel battling the forces of Hell with a none-too-subtle combination of large guns and divine magic. You got to pull off all kinds of biblical stuff, like summoning plagues of locusts and turning men into pillars of salt.

Of course, no matter how just the cause, casting an angel in the role of a game's chief shit-kicker is bound to offend some, so for an altogether more wholesome approach to the whole thing, why not pop along to Rock Solid Software (<http://www.wave.net/rocksolid/>) – purveyors of high-quality (it says here) Christian-themed games for all the family?

First on their roster is *Adventures With Chickens*, which sounds potentially un-Christian (and, indeed, unnatural and unhealthy), yet is described as "a whimsical Christian action/puzzle/adventure game", the aim of which is to "rescue purple chickens from suffocating in the harsh confines of deep space." In case you're concerned that it still doesn't

sound particularly Christian, read on and you discover that "along the way you get a healthy dose of the Word of God". Hurrah.

If *Adventures With Chickens* doesn't crank your holy ratchet, you'll just have to wait for their forthcoming opus, *Nat*. *Nat*, apparently, is "a new Christian overhead 3D/action/adventure/RPG/puzzle game" (not good at narrowing down their genres, these Christians). Anyway, "you are Nat, a futuristic evangelist and a courageous adventurer who goes the extra mile to search the ends of the Universe for people who are hungry for the Word of God".

Level one is set entirely in sacrilegious sin hole of the north, Doncaster. Okay, not really.

From the new Channel 5 series *When Games Are Shit*.

over a Chot is a risky business in itself. Other characters, such as engineers or medics, may seem more staid, but have unique abilities, or access to certain kinds of equipment that may help you out. And those are just the *human* options...

POLISHED AND SHINY?

Incidentally, it all looks damn fine, if no longer quite so epoch-shattering as the moment when the first *Messiah*

screenshots exploded on to the scene back in '97. The game is now a 3D-

accelerator-only title, and looks it. Aside from all the smoke, transparency and lighting effects, there's some fancy-pants polygon-adjustment system at work which, it is alleged, keeps the frame-rate sliding smoothly, no matter how many enemies and objects appear onscreen, by removing superfluous polygons on the fly. Apparently, anyway: to be honest, we just sat there and thought "ooh – this looks bloody nice".

That's about all we've got room for right now. To recap: *Messiah* really is coming, it's more of an arcade game than we thought it might be, it's easy on the eye and very, very intriguing to play.

More when we get it and, to be honest, we're getting impatient. PCZ



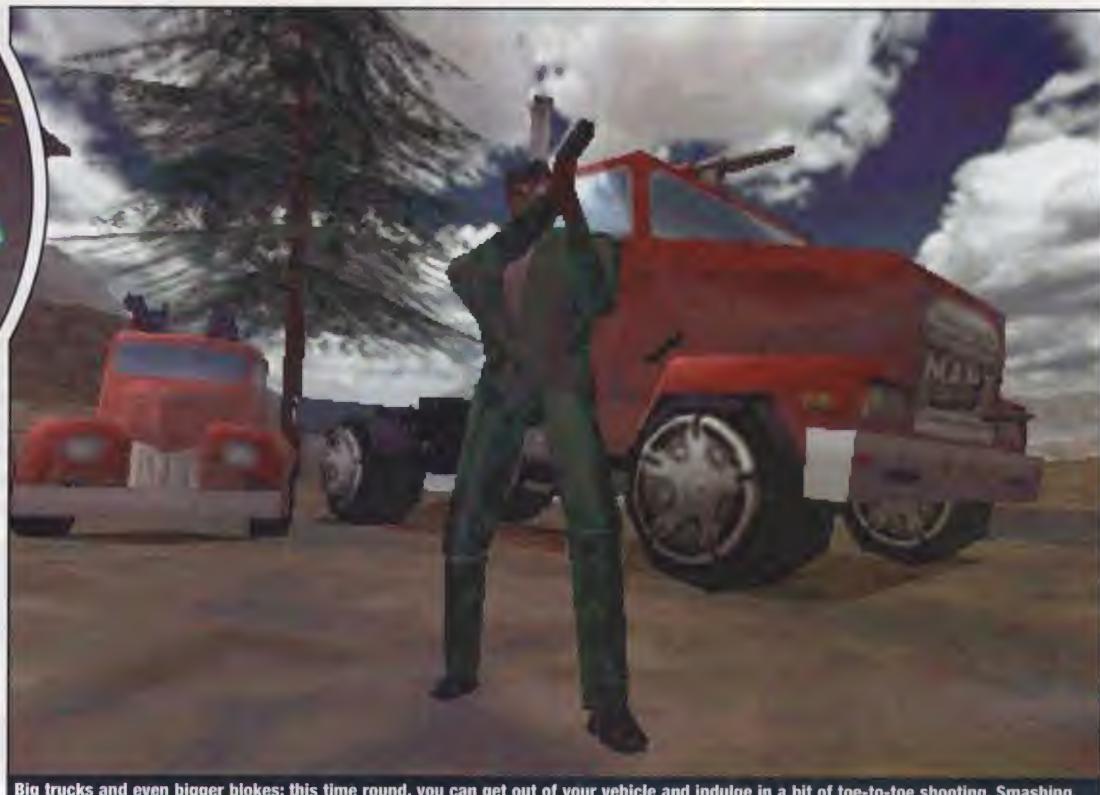
This looks just like PC ZONE's very own Tim MacDonald. Not that you know what he looks like. But it does, honest.

From the new Channel 5 series *When Testes Distend*.

Step into your time machine, it's... INTERSTATE 82



Thatcher in Downing Street, Reagan in the White House, Kajagoogoo in the charts. Why would anyone want to celebrate 1982 anyway? Charlie Brooker investigates



Big trucks and even bigger blokes: this time round, you can get out of your vehicle and indulge in a bit of toe-to-toe shooting. Smashing.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Activision

PUBLISHER Activision

WEBSITE www.activision.com

OUT November

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Interstate 76 meets Miami Vice
- ★ First-person shooting elements as well as driving
- ★ Bigger, more complex environments
- ★ Evocative soundtrack

Come On! Eileen! Too! Rye! Ay! Yes, it's 1982 once again, ladies and gentlemen. Having turned back the clocks to the era of flares and dangerously bulbous afros for *Interstate 76*, Activision are now focusing their attention on the age of pastels, *Miami Vice* and *Culture Club* for the sequel, the logically-titled *Interstate 82*.

Ahh, yes, the early eighties. Mmm. Don't worry if you weren't really old enough to remember them the first time around - for the purposes of this preview, we're going to pretend it's 1982 again. And remember, this is just a bit of fun. Okay. So where are we? Right. 1982. Good setting for a computer game, because it marks the year in which home computers really started to take off. All over the country, pasty-faced schoolboys spent Christmas playing

Hungry Horace on their brand new 48K Sinclair ZX Spectrum. *Tron* was showing down the local cinema. Elsewhere in the cultural world, hip-hop had just been invented, but was yet to make much impression on the music charts, which were instead filled with utter rubbish. No, really: take a look at the accompanying

“One minute you’re hunting for something in your vehicle, next you’re on foot, involved in a shoot-out”

boxout to see what we mean. On the telly, *Knight Rider* and *The A Team* were compulsive viewing (if you were young or an imbecile, that is). Channel Four had just started, fulfilling an important public service by broadcasting mucky French arthouse films in the middle of the night for the benefit of sweaty-palmed adolescents. Politically, it was a period of hawkish right-wing lunacy: while the superpowers

engaged in a terrifying arms race, we were saddled with a goggle-eyed, pit-closing psychopath in 10 Downing Street, and an ugly little war in the Falklands.

Actually, all things considered, 1982 itself was a bit rubbish, really. Good job *Interstate 82* looks like it isn't. Here's why.

Just like its predecessor, *Interstate 82* is a tongue-in-cheek driving-and-combat game with an evocative period soundtrack and an exaggerated nod to the fashions of the day. This time around, however, you can get out of the car and run around on foot, in a familiar *Quake*-y style.

This is, of course, A Very Good Thing. For years we've been pining for a game that combines the thrills 'n' spills of high-octane car chases with

the white-knuckle in-your-noseness of a first-person shooter.

“Wouldn’t it be good”, we used to whine, “if there was a game where you could drive a car to the scene of an incident, just like in a racing game, and then get out and start shooting people?”

Well now they've gone and done exactly that. You can even get out and hop into someone else's car. It's not the first to mix driving and first-person elements - there was *Red Line Racer* (PCZ #62, 78%) before this, but that doesn't really count because it wasn't much cop. *Interstate 82*, though, we have very high hopes for.

THAT'S THE LOOK, THAT'S THE LOOK

Why? Well, the visuals are great. Yeah, yeah, blah blah blah - the visuals for new, upcoming games are always great. What else is there? It's all mission-based, for a start. Each of the 17 stages comprises a big



Only Interstate 82 can out-Duke the *Dukes of Hazzard*. Here's the proof.



This is the year of the chunky sports car.



Less of the wide-open spaces.



Hood-mounted flamethrowers set this apart from the ones used in the crappy *Miami Vice*.

overall task broken up into lots of itty-bitty little ones. One minute you're hunting for something in your vehicle, the next you're on foot in the middle of a shoot-out. Ten minutes later you're back in the car, trying to get the hell out of there before a big bomb goes off. There's always plenty going on, in other words – and since the accent is firmly on simple arcade cathartics, it shouldn't get over-complicated.

Not enough? Well, how about complex 3D environments to drive around in? One criticism of *Interstate 76* was the Spartan nature of the levels – too wide and flat for our taste buds. *Interstate 82* does the decent thing by including built-up areas to hammer through – like a bizarre alternate Las Vegas, replete with glaring neon and authentically hideous architecture. It's not just cities either: there are stages set in shopping malls and underground

sewers, just to keep things spicy (and silly).

Chunky, chunky, borderline-ugly sports cars seemed to be in vogue during the eighties – this was the age of the DeLorean, y'know – and the game's selection of vehicles reflects this. Prepare to encounter lots of rigid rectangular headlights and boxy panelwork, with many of the cars receiving the added bonus of hood-mounted flamethrowers. They've got realistic handling, and receive realistic – and visible – damage. And there are helicopters, too. Coo.

THE LOOK OF LOVE

Tying it all together is a story that begins with Groove Champion – star of the original *Interstate 76* – uncovering a political conspiracy, finding himself in extremely hot water, and disappearing in a sinister may-or-may-not-have-been-murdered type way. Enter his sister, a biker

RAIDERS OF THE POP CHARTS

Whenever we start to reminisce about the pop charts of the early eighties, we start feeling a little nauseous here at *ZONE* Towers. 1982 in particular was probably the worst year for music ever: check out this roll call of hideousness...

Hall and Oates: Maneater

"Watch out, boy, she'll chew you up," they sang. "Ooh, here she comes – she's a *maneater*!" A golden opportunity for pornographic and/or cannibalistic imagery which was sadly overlooked in the video.

Bonnie Tyler: Total Eclipse Of The Heart

Turn around, bright eyes: this is surely a contender for the most pompous song of all time. In it, Bonnie discusses the workings of a fragile relationship without ever truly making sense. Apparently, once upon a time she was falling in love, whereas now she's always falling apart – and there's nothing she can do: it's a total eclipse of the heart. Furthermore, every now and then she gets a little bit terrified, until she sees the look in your eye. Still, all things considered, she needs you *now*, tonight – she needs you more than ever. And if you'd only hold her tight, you'd be holding on forever. Then there was a bit about something "giving off sparks", and a proclamation that "forever's gonna start tonight". Like f***k it will, you poodle-haired bitch.

Toto: Africa

"I kiss the rain down in Africa," indeed. Kiss *this*, Toto.

James Ingram: Ya Moh B There

We never did work out what this one was all about. Bloody annoying, though.

Kajagoogoo: Too Shy

Ironically, they weren't 'too shy' to appear on *Top of the Pops* sporting horrific spiky haircuts which made them look for all the world like animated spider plants. "Hush hush, eye-to-eye..." You can *POKE IT*, Limah...

Kim Wilde: Cambodia

Oh, please.

Dexy's Midnight Runners: Come On Eileen

The song destined to be sung by drunken Geography students at the end of beery nights out for years and years to come first surfaced in 1982.

Survivor: Eye of the Tiger

"Just a man and his will to survive," sang Survivor on this hit from the *Rocky III* soundtrack. Speaking of Survivor, can anyone remember any other song by them ever? No? Funny that.

Wham: Young Guns Go For It!

"Wise guys realise there's danger in emotional ties," sang George and Andrew. "See me, single and free, no mess, no stress, I'm where I wanna be," they continued, before further tormenting their victim with the "death by matrimony" taunt. Years later, one's sunk without trace, the other was arrested performing a lewd act in a toilet. And they were trying to give us advice? Fah.



Just pray that your rollbar is working...



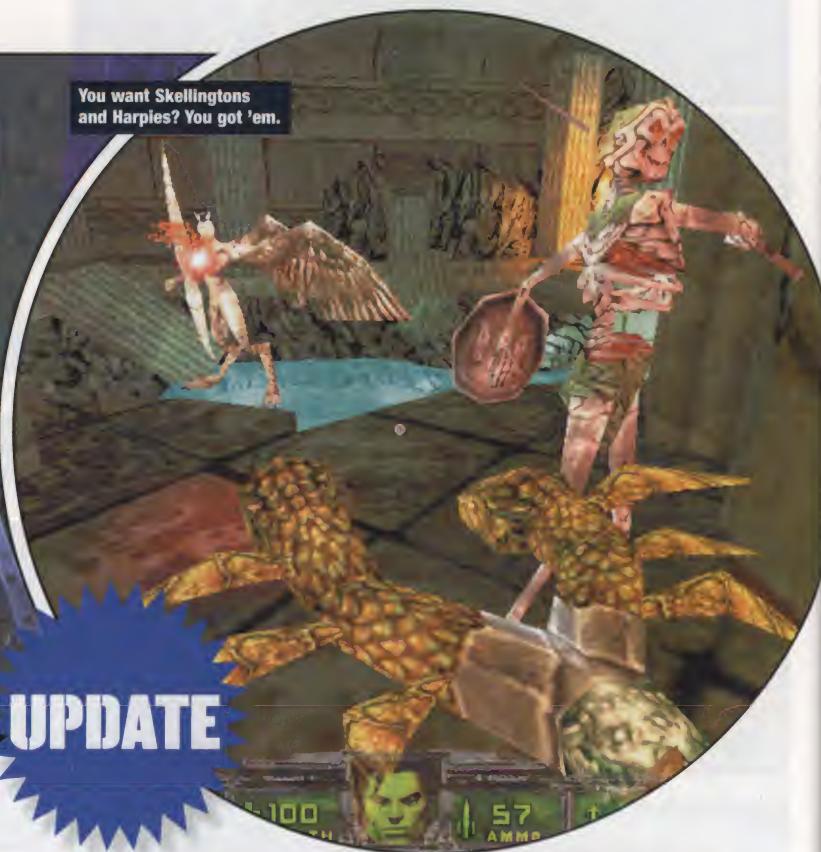
It's not all pastels and back-perms, OK?



Let the blood run free.

You want Skellingtons and Harpies? You got 'em.

UPDATE



Remember me?

DAIKATANA

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ion Storm
 PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
 WEBSITE www.daikatana.com
 OUT December 1999

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's been delayed for years
- ★ Designed by 'gaming legend' John Romero
- ★ First proper game from Ion Storm
- ★ It's actually coming out... apparently



ION STORM

They certainly give it the large one, but in terms of games released, Ion Storm have very little to show for it

1998: *Dominion: Storm Over Girt 3*. An unspectacular start with this real-time strategy affair resurrected from the defunct 7th Level.

Steve Hill brings you up to date with the game that time forgot

Dallas, Texas: February 1999. Atop the Ion Storm skyscraper, the cream of the UK gaming press is assembled for a final look at the heavily delayed *Daikatana* prior to its pending release. Or so we were told. Over the course of a three-day visit, we were given a perfunctory run through of some of the single-player game, and had a swift dabble on an average DeathMatch level. There was no sign of the promised sidekicks, and the mythical *Daikatana* sword was yet to be implemented. In fact, the closest we came to any real gameplay was in the Ion Storm common room, where prolonged bouts of table tennis and pool ensued, not to mention the arcade classic *Scramble* (which yours truly actually managed to complete). The long and short of it is that *Daikatana* was nowhere near finished, and we might as well have gone to Blackpool.

If you're not familiar with the *Daikatana* saga, the game was originally due out in the Spring of 1998, but difficulties integrating the *Quake II* engine led to major slippage, the situation not helped by a sizeable number of the team later walking out. Back in February, John Romero explained: "The thing is I've never before had to say when I'm going to finish a game. I started working on it and when

“I've never before had to say when I'm going to finish a game. I started working on it and when it was done it came out.”

it was done it came out." He was still confident though. "It's awesome," he beamed. "The game is just really cool. I know *Daikatana* is going to be a great game. I want the game design to be the thing that really sets the game apart. In *Half-Life* what really set it apart was the design. It used the *Quake I* engine with coloured lighting, y'know. Okay, so it's using this old technology but it's the game that

really mattered. That's just why everybody remembers it."

Clearly, the first-person goalposts have moved since the release of *Half-Life*. Romero wasn't fazed though, claiming: "It helps us that they came out first. I don't think it hurt us at all. It helped us that it came out and we could see how much people really do like a well-directed story game and it just makes us feel great - they're gonna love this game."

FOUR PLAY

As for the story, it embraces all manner of cod mythology and spans four different time zones and locations, namely Japan, Ancient Greece, medieval Norway and futuristic San Francisco. Each location has completely different environments, weapons and enemies, and as Romero says, "It's pretty much four complete games in one where everything changes. No-one's ever done that before. It's totally cool. It's like playing a game like *Chrono Trigger* where all of a sudden - boom - you change time periods and everything is different, all the graphics are different, and you think, 'Wow I have to explore another world again'. People that got the shareware version of *Doom*, they'd



Explosions and everything, if you hadn't guessed.

Midland Bank resurrect the Griffin Savers account.

"I'm The Daddy now!"

download it, play it and finish the shareware version. They thought they'd played *Doom*, been there, seen it, done it. Dude, there were two more episodes of *Doom*, y'know. They'd play the first episode and consider it was the most badass game ever. So they'll play *Daikatana*, starting with the first episode and think, 'Wow, that was really cool, that was really great'. Boom! Go to another episode. 'Holy Cow! Y'know, this is totally different. Boom! Oh my God, this is different again. Boom! Jesus Christ, what's going on?' Then they'll finally finish the game at the end of the fourth episode."

We finally finished and left him to get on with it and returned home to await the inevitable new release date. A token announcement of September was made, and the world shrugged.

SARF OF THE RIVER

Fast forward then to the end of October and a room in Eidos' Wimbledon HQ. Ten PCs are up and running, each with a shiny build of *Daikatana* installed, offering eight of the eventual 24 single-player levels and a couple of DeathMatch maps. Several hours of play followed, garnering a mixed

response from the assembled loafers. It's certainly playable, but still lacking in sidekicks, and with the eponymous magic sword being kept as a 'surprise'.

Also present was top Eidos bod, John Kavanagh, who has spent most of last year in Dallas overseeing the Ion Storm operation. He remains confident: "It's fun, it's action-packed and it's a great first-person game. People are waiting for more of that, they want more, there hasn't been anything for a while. All these supposed *Quake*-killers, a lot of them didn't appear – this is the one that has. It doesn't necessarily stand head-to-head against *Half-Life*, but I think it stands up to it. It's a different kind of game. What John was trying to do was follow up his games, not what anybody else was doing. So, what is *Daikatana*? It's the follow up to *Doom* and *Quake*."

That's fair comment indeed, and the influences are plain to see as the lineage that was started by *Wolfenstein* continues into the next millennium. Whether that's what the public want will become clear this Christmas, when it finally goes on sale. If nothing else, we can at least confirm that the game does actually exist. Who knows, we might even review it next month. **PCZ**



Look, the sidekicks do exist. That's Superfly and this is Mikiko, which is Japanese for Shrimp. You incidentally, are Hiro Miyamoto.

Q&A

JOHN ROMERO



The other millionaire
JR from Dallas

PCZ What was the
first game you ever
played?

JOHN The first? *Space Invaders* I think. No, it was *Pong*, definitely *Pong*.

PCZ And what is the best game you've
ever played?

JOHN The best? The best game was probably *Chrono Trigger*.

PCZ What was the last game you paid
money for?

JOHN That I paid money for? Oh, like the latest thing I just bought? I just bought

Baldur's Gate. (NB: This was in February.)

PCZ Have you ever had a fight?

JOHN Like a physical fight? Yeah, in school like in fourth grade.

PCZ Can you remember it?

JOHN Er, yeah. I was on these monkey bars and this one kid was pissed off at me for some reason, and I swung through the monkey bars and just kicked him on his ass, and after that he just left. Instead of sitting there trying to lame punch him, I swung off and kicked him down into the ground and he thought that was too hardcore and left. That was in fourth grade. After that it was dog-and-cat torture and then video games...



"I only tapped him once..."



"You look in, I'll, err, watch the bridge."



"Must cost a fortune to light this place..."



"It says Made in China, 90% something..."



"Do we have to take our shoes off?"

FIRST ENCOUNTER

ICEWIND DALE

Andrew Wright stumbles across a deep dungeon follow-up to *Baldur's Gate*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Black Isle Studios
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.interplay.com
OUT Spring 2000

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Based on best-selling *Baldur's Gate*
- New 3D fog and lighting effects
- More weapons, magic and monsters
- Up to six user-created characters in party

Black Isle Studios have really got into their stride. Following the huge success of *Baldur's Gate* – and the forthcoming *Planescape Torment* – the California-based developers are rolling towards a Spring 2000 release date for the next title in the series, *Icewind Dale*.

Icewind Dale will be set in the Forgotten Realms, a traditional Tolkiensque fantasy campaign setting, where your own personalised party of up to six adventurers will face standard fantasy fodder, ranging from goblins and lizard men to giant

beetles and the enormous cyclops and frost giants.

Icewind Dale will use an enhanced version of the Bioware Infinity engine as used in *BG* and *Torment* and this means much bigger monsters and better animated backdrops and scenery. Spell effects will look especially cool as Black Isle has a single designer working purely on that very thing. There will also be a shedload of new magic items, weapons and artefacts, and page after page of new spells to experiment with, not to mention some 40 new monsters – each with more than one animated attack routine.

Perhaps the best news is that 3D acceleration support will be included using OpenGL to create smooth fogging effects and improve the in-game lighting, although you won't need a 3D card to run it. Hardware requirements are likely to be steeper than for *Baldur's Gate* with at least a Pentium 300 needed for comfortable play.

Like *Baldur's Gate*, the new title will follow the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition* rules but, to keep

the game playable, there will be very few changes to the basic game system. It will concentrate on role-playing and party development, so no single character will hog all the limelight. This means you'll have to choose six balanced characters right from the off and you won't be able to boost your team with super-skilful NPCs or replace the ones that get the chop. At least this approach should make the game more multi-player friendly than

catastrophic ones will only be usable by the bad guys.

The plot is inevitably going to be linear. However, the dozens of minor quests will help you earn experience and build your characters up to the 15th level. You won't be able to import *BG* characters as, according to Black Isle, this would ruin the game balance.

"There's less open and random exploration in *Icewind Dale* as most quests and dialogues will

"There will be a shedload of new magic items, weapons and artefacts, and page after page of new spells"

its predecessors, opening up some interesting cooperative play possibilities. Of course, you'll meet plenty of NPCs – and they may even accompany you for a time – but they'll have their own motivations and allegiances.

No new character classes or races are being introduced, although new higher level skills, spells and abilities will be introduced for each class. Your characters will be able to gain ninth level spells but some of the really

relate back to the main quest," says producer Chris Parker.

The game's emphasis will be on the 50 or so dungeon levels, although several towns and outdoor locations will be visited. These will include icy mountain passes, geothermal caves, haunted ruins and a web of intricate tunnels and underground chambers and according to Black Isle should give up to 80 hours of gameplay. You'd better buy shares in Nescafé... **PCZ**

MICROSOFT
SIDEWINDER

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Check out the detail on those buildings.

A chopper. Yesterday.

Obligatory external view in action.

Several cockpit views will be available (gasp).

You can choose to fight as American, British or German pilots.

Helicopter sim in realism shocker.

Gunship! will be compatible with M1 Tank Platoon!

FIRST ENCOUNTER

GUNSHIP!

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Hasbro Interactive
PUBLISHER Hasbro Interactive
WEBSITE www.microprose.com
OUT TBA

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Links in with *M1 Tank Platoon!*
- Has '!' instead of '3' in the title
- Mission editor included
- Claims to be the most realistic yet

Back in the mists of time, a truly ground-breaking flight simulator came onto the market. *Gunship* had virtually no graphics at all, limited campaigns, non-existent AI and remains one of the best helicopter flight models ever released. Since then, there have been more Apache simulators than you can shake a stick at – from the truly awful *Longbow* through to the pretty reasonable *Apache Vs Havoc*.

Now Hasbro have a long and glorious reputation for extending the

A brand new helicopter sim on the horizon? Simon Bradley salivates at the prospect

lineage of their products. Their current trend is to eschew numbering in favour of punctuation. So *Gunship 3* is now *Gunship!* and the next instalment could be *Gunship!!*.

But enough of this. There are a whole lot of helicopter simulators out there right now, with several more hovering just beyond the horizon. So *Gunship!* is going to have to be pretty good, and initial impressions are that it won't disappoint. As you can see from the screenshots, the graphics are certainly up to spec, even if you can't tell the frame-rate from stills. The good news is that although the main aircraft is still the ubiquitous Apache Longbow, you also get to fly the Eurocopter Tiger should you wish to do so, as well as being the big bad Ivan in the Mi28 Havoc in multiplayer games. This is great, as is the fact that the variety of aircraft means that you can play in single-player mode as an American, a Brit or a German.

Presumably, there will be a number of appalling 'voice talents' providing local colour as your wingmen and gunner for the different nationalities. But that's not the really exciting bit. Oh no. There's more...

“For the first time ever (cue trumpet fanfare) a flight sim is going to be able to link up with a ground sim. *Gunship!* will be compatible with *M1 Tank Platoon!*”

For the first time ever (cue trumpet fanfare) a flight sim is going to be able to link up with a ground sim. *Gunship!* will be compatible with *M1 Tank Platoon!* which should ship some time later on next year, giving a real integrated battlefield. Now I get quite excited about this type of option because I reckon it's the way to go. I also remember that Hasbro, when they were still MicroProse, said that they were going to develop an electronic battlefield

to link in with *Falcon 3*. That must have been about five years ago. So maybe we should treat this claim with a healthy degree of scepticism – although I truly hope that it's going to happen soon.

To sum up, Hasbro is claiming that *Gunship!* will be the most accurate helicopter simulator ever, and will boast realistic terrain, proper communications and a decent flight model. But then it would be, wouldn't it? It also models system failures, so I guess the Apache pilots will spend most of their campaigns waiting for spares. Anyway, *Gunship!* promises much, and on Hasbro's track record so far it may well deliver. I do hope so. Just watch this space. 

MICROSOFT
SIDEWINDER

Jumpcrouchstepleft aimfire.



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TOMB RAIDER
THE LAST REVELATION

Coming Soon!

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation and TM Core Design Limited 1999.
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Midtown Madness with better graphics? Suits us, sir.



Street life: the lonely life of the kerb-crawler.



Forget Driver, this is the driving game we really want.



Urban traffic chaos. Can't these people drive?



When have you seen a cop car look this good?



Multiplayer promises to be a right old laugh.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

FELONY PURSUIT

The age-old struggle for good and evil resurfaces once more – this time in the guise of a futuristic cops 'n' robbers 'em up. Charlie Brooker extrapolates

future, it depicts a crime-infested city in which spectacular car chases twixt officers of the law and criminals of the anti-law are a regular occurrence. Sort of like *Driver*, you might say, and you'd be right – but *Felony Pursuit*'s traffic-packed by-ways are pure *Midtown*, say we. And like that game, it looks damned impressive too.

As it should do: to ensure an air of all-round properness, developers Polygon have employed the services of a veritable hit parade of professional oddjobbers. Professional architects (the über-poncey Philippe Starck team, no less) helped formulate the buildings, professional urban planners advised on the city layout, and professional car designers put their two cents worth in when it came to creating the game's futuristic vehicles. With this much attention to detail, they probably got a medium to contact James Dean, Marc Bolan, and Princess Di, in order to find out what it's like to be involved in a major car crash, too (*I doubt this very much – Ed*).

So, impressively detailed visuals, then –

and apparently it should all run at a smooth 60 frames per second. What's more, for once it's worth poking an eyeball at the statistics too. Apparently the environment consists of over 100 miles of gridlocked city streets, split across seven islands. There's a choice of 15 different cars,

seriously too (it's worth noting that *Felony Pursuit* is also appearing on Sega's by-golly-it's-got-a-modem Dreamcast console). All being well, you should be able to play through every mission as either a cop or a robber, with an online opponent playing the opposite role – or you can

“Professional architects (the über-poncey Philippe Starck team) helped formulate the buildings and car designers put their two cents worth in as well”

and 38 missions to complete. Oh. Did we mention the missions? No? Ah well, that's another thing: the game is entirely mission-based, which we like the sound of a lot.

Multiplayer gameplay is being taken

opt for a more standard, anarchic multiplayer free-for-all.

All in all, it's enough to cause immediate saliva build-up in the most dryly cynical of gaming mouths (*What are you talking about? – Ed*).

Fingers crossed they manage to pack all the 'drone traffic' into the multiplayer stages, mind. *Felony Pursuit* is due to swerve into view sometime early next year. You know – in the year 2000. Space year 2000. Like, the future, man. **PCZ**



You can't help thinking what this is a substitute for.

Total Control.

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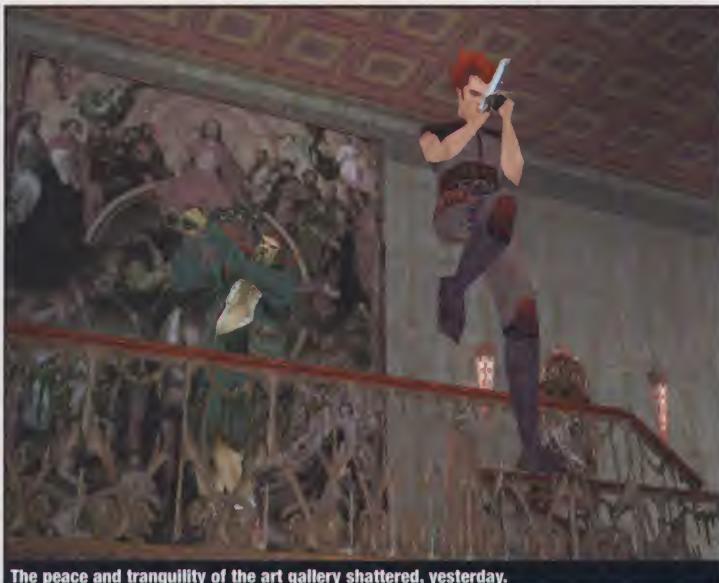
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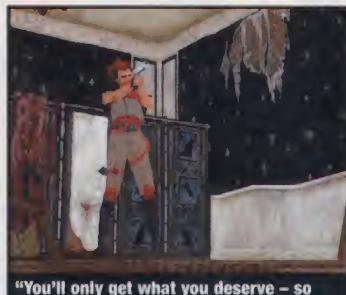
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The peace and tranquility of the art gallery shattered, yesterday.



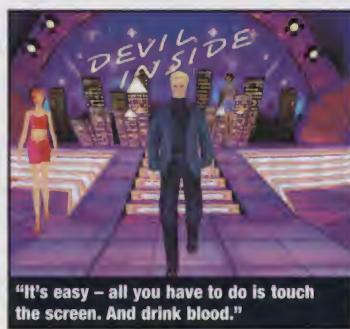
Good heavens, that's clearly illegal. In most countries, anyway.



"You'll only get what you deserve - so back off now Llewelyn-Bowen."



Oh no, the scary Shakespeare's Sister is making a comeback.



"It's easy - all you have to do is touch the screen. And drink blood."



The explosive fart bag was very effective.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Gamesquad
PUBLISHER Cryo
WEBSITE www.gamesquad.fr
OUT TBC

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Original premise
- ★ Lots of gory zombie action
- ★ There's a cameraman running around
- ★ It's weird

Anyone out there still bemoaning the lack of originality in modern games - shut up and listen to this. *The Devil Inside* has one of the most bizarre and promising premises we've clapped brains on recently, and it should be worth paying attention to because it comes from Gamesquad, a French software house headed by Hubert 'Alone In The Dark' Chardot.

All of which is rather a bold opening paragraph, because to be brutally honest, we're not entirely sure what kind of game this is - largely because the information

THE DEVIL INSIDE

Charlie Brooker was laughing at a poorly-translated press release, but when he had a look at some early code he was forced to shut up and take the thing seriously

arriving from the publishers Cryo suffers from what you could generously call 'quirky' French-to-English translation. Take a look at the evidence and see what you make of it.

In *The Devil Inside*, you take control of two different characters - one called Dave, and one called Deva (do you see what they've done there?). Dave is a reporter/presenter for a no-holds-barred cable TV channel "dedicated to the strange, the paranormal, and the horror", and he's currently on the trail of a serial killer known as "The Night Howler". Deva is a minion of Satan, sent to Earth to gather the souls of all the bad guys. Dave bumps off and return them to Hell, from whence they came.

Now, having initially seen static screenshots and noted the developer's link with *Alone In The Dark*, we were expecting a 3D third-person adventure game - so imagine our surprise when some early code arrived which appeared to contain an incredibly gory first-person shoot 'em up instead. However, a quick shuffle through a French-language README

file turned up a set of keyboard controls, and blow us down if it isn't a far more appealing prospect altogether. You can play it first-person like *Quake*, third-person like *Tomb Raider*, from the cinematic perspective, which is familiar to *Resident Evil*, or from loads of other viewpoints - including that of the roving cameraman, who actually runs along beside you during the game (you can even turn round and shoot him in the thigh if you want). Up to three other viewpoints can be

triggered earthquakes and a button that makes gravity itself suddenly rotate by 90 degrees (which hints at some realistic physics at work somewhere in the game). The graphics are impressive, with all the fancy lighting and 3D jiggery-pokery you could wish for, and it's downright grisly in places too. There were a number of groaning zombies to shoot at (complete with destroyable limbs).

Just quite how the final product is going to hang together really is

"The graphics are impressive, with all the fancy lighting and 3D jiggery-pokery you could wish for, and it's downright grisly in places too"

placed on-screen in the corner of the main view, all at the same time, like the picture-in-picture mode on some swish televisions. In fact, it is a bit like directing your own TV show.

The more we fiddled with the early code (which is unstable, and clearly far from finished), the more intrigued we became. There's some kind of bizarre slow-motion mode, an option

anyone's guess, but it's not often we find ourselves so pleasantly captivated by original, unfinished work-in-progress code like this. *The Devil Inside* is clearly something to watch out for. The developers also seem confident - they claim to have planned a sequel already. We want more, and we'll let you know when we have it. 

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OUT DECEMBER 1999



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Action.



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WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Tramping the streets,
talking to strangers...
it's a living. Like
prostitution...

WORDS AND PHOTOS Craig Vaughan LOCATION Darlington, County Durham



GARRY WILLIAMS

36, Salesman

What's on your hard drive?

Age Of Empires 2, Alpha Centauri, Call To Power and System Shock 2.

Bit of a genre switch for you.
Yes well, I love strategy games as much as the next man, but *System Shock 2* has a lot going for it – bags of atmosphere and all of that.

Which is better: *Alpha Centauri* or *Call To Power*?

Alpha Centauri, by a nose.



LUKE FORESTER

28, Student

What's on your hard drive?

X-Beyond The Frontier, Baldur's Gate, Rogue Squadron and Privateer 2.

So you have a leaning toward *Elite*-style games?

I loved *Elite* as a kid and I bought *Privateer* recently after missing it when it was full price. I adore the open-ended gameplay of *Beyond The Frontier* – it's the closest thing to classic *Elite* yet.

Baldur's Gate?

It appeals to the closet elf in me. Gotcha.



MICHAEL DAVIS

26, Accountant

What's on your hard drive?

Kingpin, Hidden & Dangerous, Grim Fandango and System Shock 2.

Where do you think adventure games are going in the future?

Probably first person – like every other bloody genre. Mind you, if they do the job as well as *System Shock 2*, I won't mind as much.

I thought you liked first-person shooters?

Yeah, but I also want variety. I like steak, but I wouldn't want it for breakfast, lunch and dinner.



RAYMOND CARSON

34, Butcher

What's on your hard drive?

Total Air War, Mechwarrior 3, Half-Life, System Shock 2 and Quake 2.

Got a favourite?

Yeah, *Half-Life* is still the best first-person shooter around. I've been getting levels for it all over the shop – but finding time to play them is the problem.

Too busy hacking animals to small pieces?
Watch it.



LEE JOHNSON

27, Technician

What's on your hard drive?

System Shock 2, Star Wars Racer, Outcast, Hidden & Dangerous and Half-Life.

I have to ask – what did you think of *Outcast*?

I'm taking it back, actually. It's dire, and my hard drive went 'lemming' on me after I installed it, so I'm swapping it.

Any ideas what you want?

Yeah, I figure I've left *Aliens Vs Predator* for long enough, time to give it a spin.



TOM BAYSWATER

40, Clerical assistant

What's on your hard drive?

Need For Speed 3, System Shock 2.

I think we have a fad here.

Yeah well, I don't go in for the RPGs much, but this is just enough to get my interest without bogging me down in all that elven, dwarf, Tolkien crap that seems to seep out of every games shop in creation.

So you like it then?

That's what I said, wasn't it?



JOHN CLARKE

30, Programmer

What's on your hard drive?

System Shock 2, Homeworld and a bunch of apps you wouldn't be interested in.

System Shock 2 seems popular.
Hmm, I'm not so sure about it. The combat can be a bitch and I think the monsters look a bit lame compared to the quality of the ship design.

The ship does look the business, though.

Yeah, but that's not really the game, is it?



DIPAK PANCHAL

24, Civil servant

What's on your hard drive?

Quake, Bioforge and a load of other budget stuff.

So, you're thinking of opening a museum?

No, I just haven't got around to buying a new system. This one saw me through college and I suppose I'm loath to part with it.

Bin it and upgrade, you know you want to.

You got a relative building computers or something, salesboy?



DANNY RICHARDS

31, Mechanic

What's on your hard drive?

Midtown Madness, Toca 2,

Screamer, Rally 2 and Driver.

Fancy yourself behind the wheel a bit?

Oh yes, I've got a steering wheel and pedal set up for my PC and my PSX. I love a good blast around. Beats those shitty shoot 'em ups into the ground.

You're the tolerant sort then?

Nope, but I figure that as long as I vent it on the computer the streets are safe.



KATE PHILLIPS

28, Civil Servant

What's on your hard drive?

Age Of Empires and Curse Of Monkey Island.

No blood 'n' guts for you then?

I haven't got sharp enough reflexes for shooting games. I prefer games that make me think. Besides, if I want to see internal organs, I'll just find some annoying bloke who won't stop asking stupid questions and fillet the git.

Umm... see ya.

REVIEWS

Don't spend a single penny until you've checked out the **ZONE** reviews first

WHERE TO CALL

Having trouble finding any of the games listed in the reviews section of the magazine? Here are the numbers you need to call

Acclaim 0171 344 5000

Activision 01895 456700

Anco 01322 292513

Blue Byte 01604 232200

Codemasters 01926 814132

Cryo 01926 315550

Eidos Interactive 0181 636 3000

Electronic Arts 01753 549442

Empire Interactive 0208 343 7337

Europress 01625 855000

Gremlin Interactive 0114 263 9900

GT Interactive 0208 222 9700

Hasbro Interactive 0181 569 1234

Infogrames 0161 827 8000

Interplay 0171 551 4222

Microids (France) 00 33 146 01 54 01

Microsoft 0181 242 1000

Mindscape 01444 246333

NovaLogic 0171 405 1777

Rage Software 0151 237 2200

Take 2 Interactive 01753 722900

THQ 01483 767656

Ubi Soft 0181 944 9300

ZablaC 01626 332233

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at **ZONE** pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 118. This is where you have the opportunity to get your point of view into **PC ZONE**. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.



DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

PC ZONE CLASSIC **90-100%** Here at **ZONE** we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a score of 90 or above, it is awarded the **PC ZONE** Classic award. These games are original, innovative, compelling and are worth buying even if you're not a fan of the genre.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED **80-89%** If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a **PC ZONE Recommended** award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-69% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre, or you see it at a reduced price.

PC ZONE PANTS **0-19%** Games that score under 20% should be avoided. They offer little in the way of long-term appeal, can be frustrating, and definitely aren't much fun. If a game is seriously bugged, then it will also fall into this category. You have been warned.



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72 AGE OF EMPIRES II: THE AGE OF KINGS



76 PHARAOH



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“As soon as you hear the music, use the whip to swing to a far-off ledge and watch the man lift up his hat and wipe the sweat from his brow, you’re sucked into it like fat in a liposuction machine...”

INDIANA JONES AND THE INFERNAL MACHINE

★ £39.99 • Activision • Out 26 November

**PC ZONE
RECOMMENDED**

When he was a kid, Mark Hill wanted to be Indiana Jones. He spent three weeks using his belt as a whip, with his trousers round his ankles. All we can say is thank God for computer games

When he was a kid, Mark Hill wanted to be Indiana Jones.

He spent three weeks

using his belt as a whip, with his trousers round his ankles. All we can say is thank God for computer games

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card
WE SAY P266 with 64Mb RAM

There was a time when archaeology meant straggly old bearded men camping in the desert, sleeping in caravans, eating baked beans from tin pots, dusting stones



The art of whip-swinging Part I: Indy dives into a lamp like a moth.



The art of Whip-swinging Part II: Indy surveys the perils of anorexia.

to aspire to, next to astronauts and firemen.

There was also a time when everything George Lucas had a hand in was touched by his visionary genius. And so was born Indiana Jones and the Greatest Trilogy of Adventure Films Ever Made. The James Bond of academia, he single-handedly turned archaeology into the most dangerous and exciting thing on

INDIANA JONES AND THE RSPCA

We don't mind killing Russian soldiers, though. Or fox-hunters, for that matter

If there's one thing we hate about *Tomb Raider*, it's having to shoot animals all the time. Being the animal lovers that we are, killing monkeys, gorillas and tigers just seems sick and wrong. It's one of the reasons it's so hard to sympathise with Lara every time she plummets to her death.

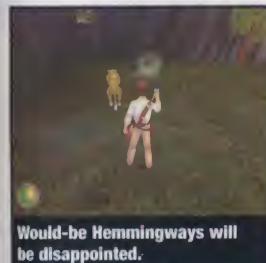
LucasArts, having a nice family-friendly image to maintain, have solved this by making most animals run away once you've fired a shot in the air. Not every animal is awarded such honorary treatment, however. Scorpions, fist-sized spiders and piranhas all need to be killed if you want to survive. In one level, you need to kill loads of ugly hyenas before a boy whose help you need will come out of his hiding place. But then not many people like hyenas anyway. If you enjoy shooting animals, maybe you should go out and buy *Deer Hunter 2* instead. You sick bastard.



Any lurking hyenas aren't left laughing for long.



If you just stand there, expect to be badly disfigured.



Would-be Hemmingways will be disappointed.



Watch that wolf run. It must be the stubble.

earth. Like Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, he's such a truly memorable character that he has become part of popular myth, making an ideal subject for computer games.

It's been over four years since the last one, *The Fate Of Atlantis*, and things have changed considerably. A certain English girl, for starters, who not only made 3D action archaeology a reality, but stole every idea and valuable artefact she could from the films across four games. Indy has got some catching up to do. And he's not in the mood for tea and biscuits.

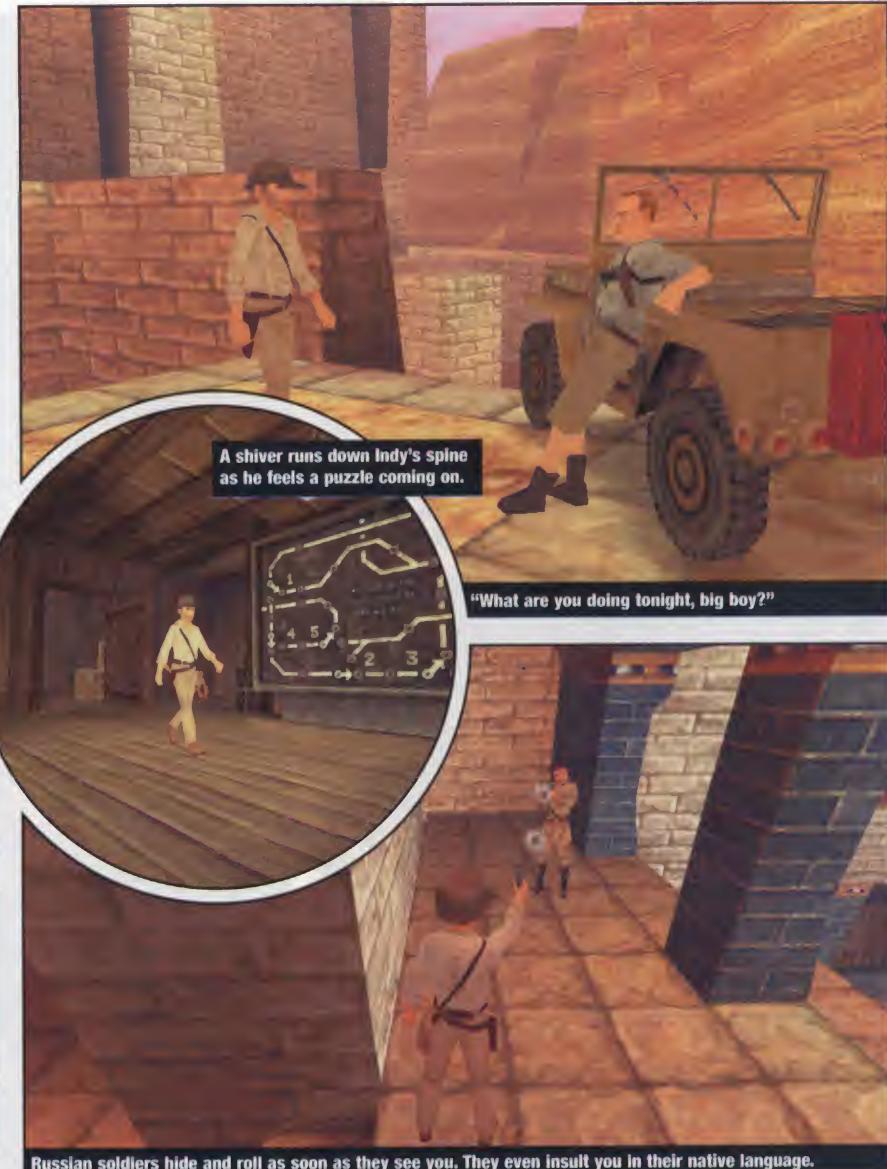
INDIANA CROFT AND THE INFERNAL REVELATION

Let's get the *Tomb Raider* comparisons out of the way. There's no denying the similarities: they're both third person with a large element of platform jumping, they have a similar range of movements and weapons and share a fetish for

lever pulling. It's hard to imagine *The Infernal Machine* existing in its present form without reference to Core's bestseller, and yet there's something in there that sets it apart.

We'll be honest here and admit that we were a bit concerned that Indy's latest outing would be a major disappointment and would continue the recent spout of inferior LucasArts titles. Early looks at the game elicited murmurs of "It's *Tomb Raider* with a hat on" and "I've seen it all before". But play *The Infernal Machine* for more than half an hour and the green latexed woman disappears completely from your mind and you start remembering all the great games Lucas has made over the years.

If we'd played *Indy* without having seen *The Last Revelation*, it would have been all too easy to dismiss Lara Croft's outings as inferior and outdated. But, as we said last month, the latest *Tomb*



Russian soldiers hide and roll as soon as they see you. They even insult you in their native language.

Raider has made such a noticeable progression towards plot, puzzle solving and interesting gameplay that such comments would be unfair. Let's just say that both games have headed in the same direction, with game engine cut-scenes

“There's plenty of head-scratching and “Hmmm”-ing and it's Indy himself, in true adventure style, who gives you most of the hints”

carrying the narrative forward and lots of character interaction.

What lifts *Indiana Jones* up a notch is just how damn playable and fun it is. We're all getting a bit tired of Lara's overexposure and, despite attempts to give her a history and personality, she's

still loved best for her computer-generated physique. Indy has real character. As soon as you hear the music, use the whip to swing to a far-off ledge and watch the man lift up his hat and wipe the sweat from his brow, you're sucked into it like fat in a liposuction machine. Except that it's considerably more enjoyable. Once you get over the fact that Harrison Ford doesn't do the voices (hardly surprising, considering he's one of Hollywood's highest paid actors), you're in Indy heaven.

REACH FOR THE SKIES

In true Indy fashion, the story concerns a biblical myth, a supernatural artefact and a race against a world military power. The myth is the Tower of Babel, a human construction which was meant to reach heaven itself and the artefact is the mysterious Infernal Machine hidden there. The game is set in the Cold War Fifties, so instead of overweight Nazis there are overweight

"godless commies", although the game doesn't quite reach McCarthy fever-pitch paranoia.

You're not immediately on a quest to find the missing pieces of the machine – you're drawn in slowly, knowing the Russians are up to something but not exactly what. It's only as the plot unfolds level after level across exotic locations over the world that Indy realises the enormity of his task. The newly established CIA sets you on the trail and occasionally butts in to help you out or to provide that essential romantic interest in the shape of Sophia.

You start off going to Babylon and infiltrating a Russian excavation sight and you're soon shooting soldiers and listening in on the heavily accented ramblings of a madman. It doesn't take long to realise that, while there's the odd bit of action, this is primarily a thinking game, where the only way to move forward is to solve puzzles. Which, given the demise of the traditional



THOSE INFERNAL MACHINES

Technology is the scourge of humanity, Microsoft is the Devil and the Internet is Hell

The title of the game isn't gratuitous – almost every obstacle you encounter is mechanical. Switches, levers, cogs, wheels, clockwork and every type of engine you can imagine up to the ultimate Infernal Machine itself, a futuristic contraption that looks like it belongs on the set of *Tron*. We're not suggesting LucasArts are a bunch of technophobes – that would be ridiculous. But there is a Luddite spirit throughout the game which lends a cohesive structure to the narrative. It's like a reworking of Chaplin's *Modern Times* with whips instead of walking sticks and a fedora rather than a bowler hat.

Indy's adventures are all about delving into the deepest past, not the future. He is a character from another age, like those fathers who don't know how to set the video, spend hours trying to get to the right page on Teletext and run away at the sight of a PC. So how come he's still so damn cool?



Man versus machine in Indy's very own version of *The Matrix*.



"Go back to the hell from whence thou came, cog!"



Yet another rather demonic machine, yesterday.

ALSO CONSIDER

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

(Eidos Interactive, £34.99) At last Lara tries something new, like an interesting storyline and some proper puzzles. The best, if surely not last, in the series.

PCZ #83, 85%

DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME

(GT Interactive, £34.99) An interesting idea, Drakan mixes platform elements, hack 'n' slash and dragon flying in one package. Psygnosis should be applauded for their ambition, even if they haven't quite pulled it off.

PCZ #82, 79%

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

(Mindscape, £34.99) The first two in the series have had a massive influence on all platform games. Shame they had to soil our memories with this unpolished 3D attempt.

PCZ #83, 31%

→ adventure genre (at which LucasArts have always excelled), is clearly a very good thing.

It would be silly to have lots of characters to talk to when most of the places you visit haven't seen human life for millennia, although some do pop up to offer essential information, lend a hand or give you puzzle-solving hints (the CIA agents, an ancient monk and a Nubian child, to name but a few). And puzzle solving is exactly what you'll be doing, picking up objects, disarming traps and figuring out how to get ancient contraptions going again.

On one level you need to get a gigantic clock working and then make it strike the hour at a precise moment. On another, you can't find a way into a partially sunken battleship until you've found a detonator, launched a

torpedo from the shore and made a great big hole in its side to swim through. There's plenty of head-scratching and "Hmmm"-ing and it's Indy himself, in true adventure fashion, who gives you most of the hints. Whenever you see something interesting, find a strange object or enter a room containing a puzzle, Indy pushes back his hat, scratches his stubble and tells you what he thinks.

YOU SAY JUMP, I SAY HOW HIGH?

There's still lots of jumping to be done, but as a platform game it is very forgiving, so you don't have to worry about dying all the time. Reaching a tricky level involves finding out the best way to get there, rather than interminable exercises in acrobatics and

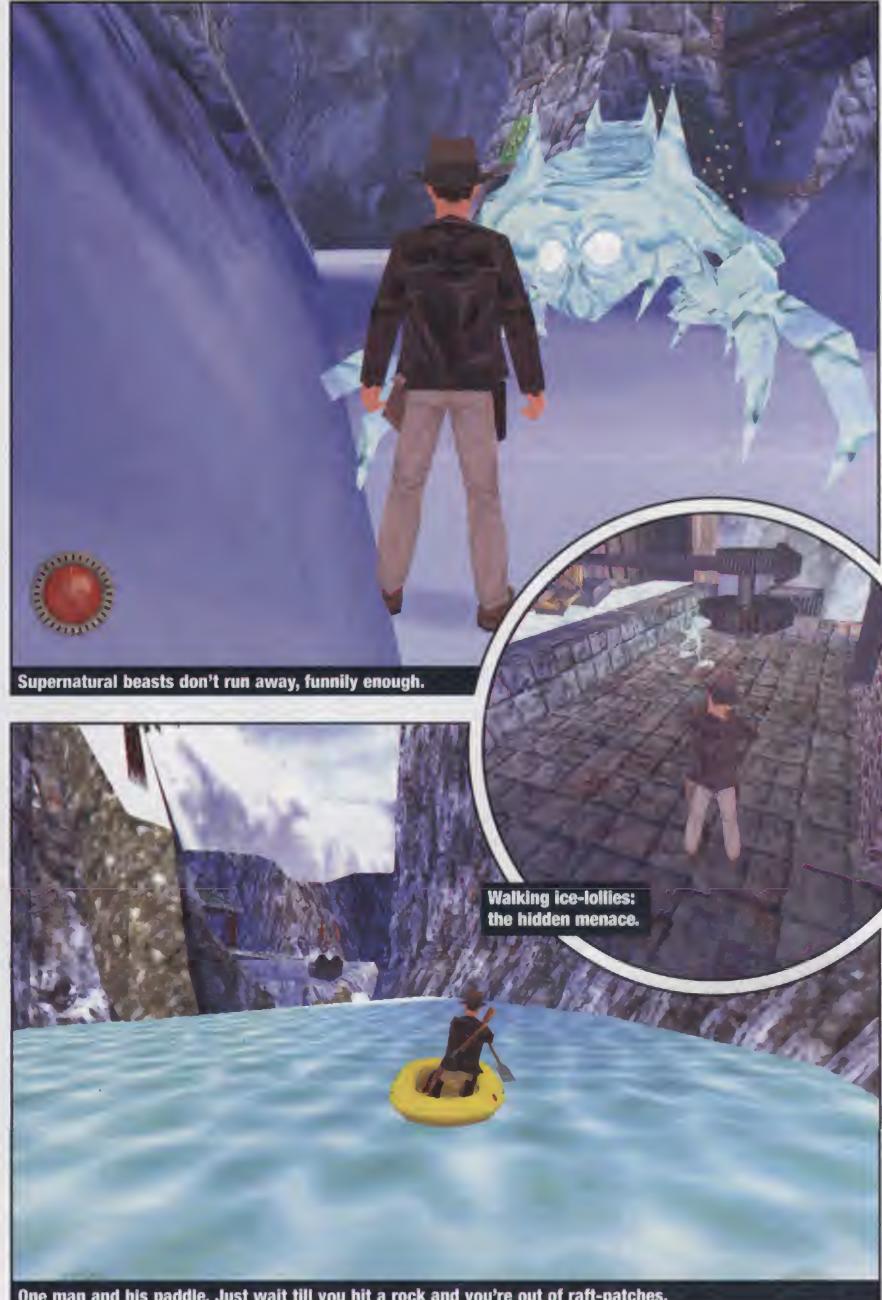
pinpoint precision. And here's another point where *Indy* scores highly. His range of movements might be slightly more restricted (no triple somersaults), but controlling him is so natural and fluid that you won't even notice. You can even use the mouse, *Hidden & Dangerous* style, which is a bonus.

Like in *The Last Revelation*, the boundary between cut-scenes and gameplay is blurred so you feel you're taking part in a film

Sudden death and hidden traps aren't a problem, as every time Dr Jones senses something nasty, a haunting tune and a few words of warning let you know to keep on the lookout. It might not sound realistic, but it actually works really well as a

sort of gaming equivalent to gut feelings and intuition. The camera also works beautifully, to the point where you don't even notice it. If it gets too close to Indy, it simply disappears, so you can always see everything you need to see. Whenever you enter an area of interest or see something particularly

important, the camera swings round in true cinematic fashion. Like in *TR: The Last Revelation*, the boundary between cut-scenes and actual gameplay is blurred to the point where you feel you're taking part in your own film.



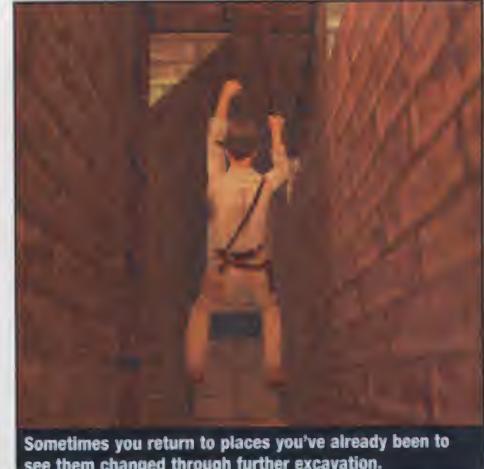
One man and his paddle. Just wait till you hit a rock and you're out of raft-patches.



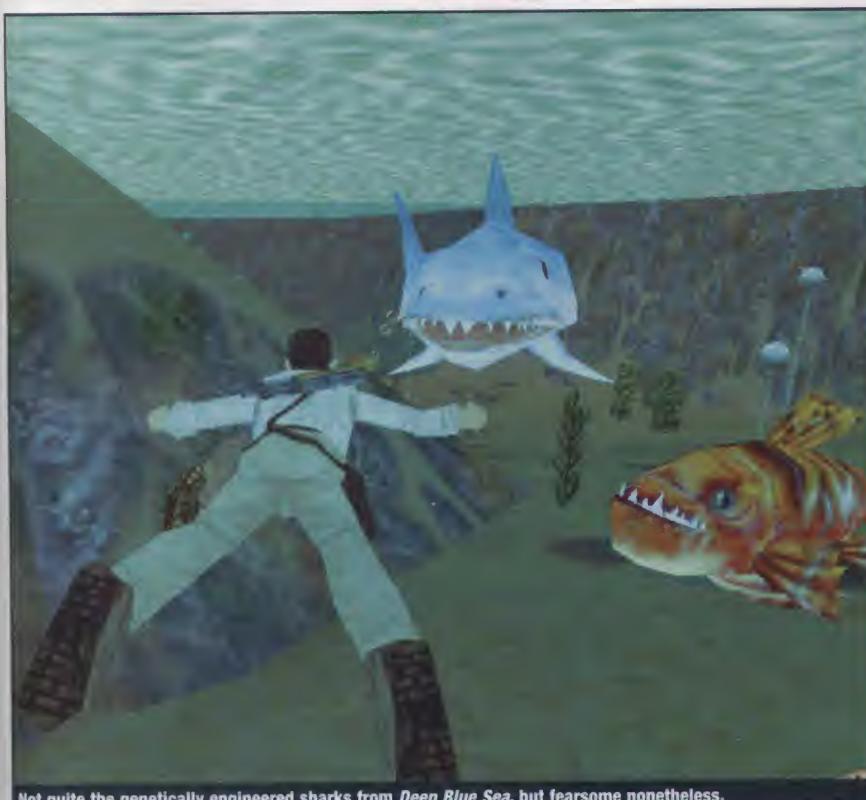
You just know something is going to go horribly wrong once you reach that precarious bridge, don't you?



Recreate those *Temple of Doom* moments. Minus the kid. Or the chasing maniacs.



Sometimes you return to places you've already been to see them changed through further excavation.



Not quite the genetically engineered sharks from *Deep Blue Sea*, but fearsome nonetheless.

TREASURED MOMENTS

Like members of Tony Robinson's *Time Team*, Indy is most often unshaven and unwashed. But he's also cool, tough and always gets the chicks – definitely more Bogart than Baldrick.

When he talks about the value of an ancient object, he usually means in dollars, rather than the "for the love of history" approach usually favoured by archaeologists. So, fittingly, there are loads of gold statues and valuable coins hidden throughout the maps for you to get your greedy hands on.

Once a level has been completed, there's a shopping screen where you can spend your goodies on ammo, poison kits and medicinal herbs. There's even a map you can buy that takes you to a hidden level which is supposed

to feature scenes from the films (like being chased by a giant rolling rock). But it costs a fortune and we haven't amassed enough pennies to try it out.

But that's not the only incentive to explore every map fully. You're also given an IQ score after each level, based on the amount of secrets you've found out and how long it's taken you to finish. A combination of the stats you get after completing a mission in an FPS and a true old-style points system, it's not entirely trustworthy as an intelligence test. Mine reached over a 100 at one point, which surely can't be right.

WIDE OPEN SPACES

The Infernal Machine was originally supposed to be a PlayStation game as well, but

the console version was cancelled. We can tell you exactly why: old Sony-boy wouldn't be able to handle it. While it's apparent that it has its roots in the console-orientated *Tomb Raider*, Indy's sheer scale is breathtaking. There are great big mountain ranges as far as the eye can see, not just a painted-on background and, while it necessarily needs the confined caves and temples, you feel that there is a world beyond.

Like in the *Midtown Madness* versus *Driver* debate, it is the PC-only version that comes out the winner, because the depth of scale removes many restrictions. When you drive vehicles you can go all over massive terrains, not just on a preset path. You don't just have to swim in small underground lakes and cave rivers – you get to dive

INDIANA JONES AND THE FOURTH INSTALMENT

There's a fourth Indy film on its way. The only question is when

Rumours on the follow-up to *The Last Crusade* have been slithering over the Internet for ages. So far, the only confirmed report is that *Indy IV* will definitely be made. Apparently, a script has already been penned with Spielberg directing, George Lucas producing and Harrison Ford donning his fedora once more. Everything else (title, cast and plot) is pure speculation and conjecture. As you'd expect from three of Hollywood's most influential men, their schedules are heavily booked, so there's no date set in stone. The most hotly tipped plots involve Atlantis (though this seems unlikely, given that it was all done in a game nearly five years ago), Noah's Ark (Indy using his whip to round up animals in pairs?) and The Garden of Eden (which would be stretching the suspense of disbelief in biblical myths a touch too far). Then there's the really outrageous rumours, like a John 'Home Alone' Hughes script set in a haunted house, or one featuring aliens and flying saucers. One thing's for sure: it will be better than *The Phantom Menace*. At least it's not a prequel.

in the sea, fight off sharks and find sunken ships and aeroplanes.

Surprisingly, great big sprawling levels don't mean getting lost and running around not knowing what to do. The levels are excellently designed and you always know where you're going. If you do get lost, there's a handy piece of chalk in your inventory that you can mark rocks and walls with.

People are still going to compare it to *Tomb Raider*, but what would you rather play, a *Star Wars* space sim or an equally good space sim featuring indeterminate aliens? Well, exactly. *Indiana Jones* is more than worthy of bearing its quality name. It has the same sense of spectacular adventure that makes the films so much fun. You'll find yourself humming the theme tune

on public transport and getting the sort of looks usually reserved for Tourette's sufferers. I haven't managed to complete it yet, but I'm willing to cut down my time playing *System Shock 2* and *CM3* until I have. And if that's not recommendation enough, I don't know what is. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS It's Indy! • Interesting puzzles • Excellent level design • It's not a PlayStation game

OWNERS It's still a platform game • Still not enough adventure elements • Harrison Ford doesn't do the voice

88 *Indiana Jones and The Surprisingly Brilliant Game*



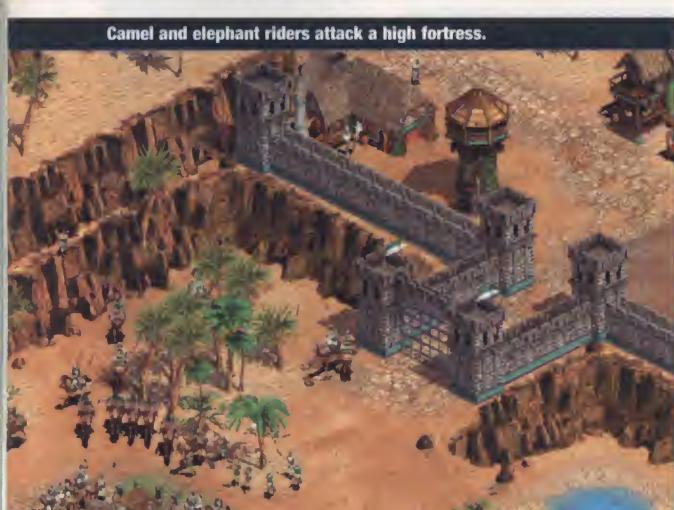
The fight does not go well.



If you don't lock your gates, the enemy could come flooding in.



Sketched stills and dodgy dialogue as between-mission fillers.



Camel and elephant riders attack a high fortress.

AGE OF THE AGE

PCZONE CLASSIC

★ £34.99 • Microsoft • Out now

Richie Shoemaker gets medieval

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 300Mb hard drive space **WE SAY** Well, it works. Just. To get the game running well in hi-res, you'll need at least a PIV/233 with 64Mb RAM

William H Gates III may well be the stepson of Satan, but by the horns of his adopted father, the boy's done all right for himself. No matter what gripes you have over Internet Explorer, DirectX or Windows, Microsoft's games have come on leaps and bounds since they released that soccer game a few years back.

Significantly, in fact, since *Age of Empires*, Microsoft's steady stream of entertainment applications has generally been of a very high quality. And if Ensemble Studios' *Age of Empires II* is anything to go by, Microsoft's next batch of games are going to be even better.

EARLY HOURS

Initially, after just a few hours of dabbling with the game, indulging in a spot of one-player skirmishes or dipping a toe into one of the five single-player campaigns, I wasn't too impressed. I actually blurted out – to my eternal shame – something along the lines that it was a bit shit. Then, as the hours rolled by, I gradually warmed to its hidden charms. I wouldn't go as far as to say that *Age of Empires II* is the most addictive game on the planet, but I can certainly see myself playing it on a regular basis, at least until the next game appears in a couple of years' time – which I'm sure it will.

First impressions, then, are a bit 'been-there, done-that'. You collect resources (in this case food, wood, stone and gold), then

can herd sheep, hunt deer, pick berries, fish and farm. Then you have to build a mill to hoard your dead meat and fruit before it starts to smell. Likewise, you'll need a mining camp to stash gold and stone, a lumber camp for wood and a dock from which you can send ships to dredge the oceans. The resource management could be a game in itself (though not a very good one, admittedly).

However, it's not quite that simple. If we take the resource management side of things, it would be fair to say that *Age II* has no equal on PC. Getting food isn't just about sending your peasants off to gather nuts. You

can herd sheep, hunt deer, pick berries, fish and farm. Then you have to build a mill to hoard your dead meat and fruit before it starts to smell. Likewise, you'll need a mining camp to stash gold and stone, a lumber camp for wood and a dock from which you can send ships to dredge the oceans. The resource management could be a game in itself (though not a very good one, admittedly).

GO ON THEN, SAY IT...

'But we have been there,' I hear you all cry, and in a sense you'd be right. If you've played and enjoyed the original *Age of*

THE KNIGHTS WHO SAY...

Breaking the sound barrier

Although the dialogue for each of the campaigns is cheesy (whoever did the Scottish accent for the William Wallace campaign should be shot), the sound is generally very good. Many sounds remain indistinguishable to the first game, but now, instead of one voice for all the races, each civilisation has its own. The villagers, of course, as you would expect, have all the best lines and consequently are just as intentionally humorous as in the first game. Not laugh-out-loud funny by any means, but certainly more interesting than the repetitive 'Yes Sirs' of other real-time strategy games.



Having a chinwag with the local monk.

EMPIRES II: OF KINGS



Although you can herd sheep, they're not too hot on the offensive.



The ships look great... until they move.



You can build cities with almost impenetrable defences.

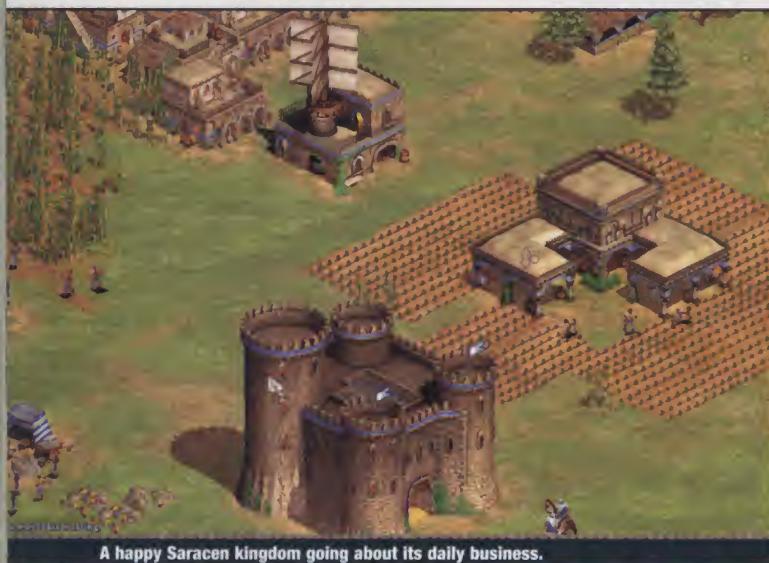




Streaming through the enemy's gate.



Each single-player mission has at least one cut-scene. Here we see Genghis Khan's horse.



A happy Saracen kingdom going about its daily business.



There are four different building 'sets', depending on which race you choose.

ALSO CONSIDER

AGE OF EMPIRES: GOLD EDITION (Microsoft, £34.99) Stretching from the dawn of civilisation until its medieval decline, the game is still remarkably playable. Going back to it after *Age II*, however, will probably disappoint many newcomers. The single-player campaigns are constricted and the AI senile, but unlike most RTS games of its day, it stands the test of time remarkably well. **NOT REVIEWED**

C&C: TIBERIAN SUN (EA, £34.99) To a far greater degree than *Age Of Empires II*, *Tib Sun* is less a full-blown sequel and more a graphical update with a few extra features. Many people will prefer the guns, choppers and tanks, for sure. And if you prefer your strategy fast, simple and full of glitz, *Tiberian Sun* is the one to go for. **PCZ#81, 90%**

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS (GT Interactive, £34.99) Goblins, mages, skeletons and trolls are the order of the day and compared to its sci-fi predecessor, the game lacks pace and the single-player game has little focus. Thankfully, there are some innovative features and the range of units more than makes up for its shortcomings. **PCZ#78, 94%**

Empires, you'll feel right at home with its sequel. You have the same resources to collect, essentially the same ages to progress through (though this time they're called Dark, Feudal, Castle and Imperial), and largely the same types of units: infantry, cavalry, siege weapons and ships.

Like its predecessor, however, *Age II* is a carefully balanced blend of units, all of which have their strengths and weaknesses, and like all strategy games, *Age II* is the interactive equivalent of two people whipping their hands from behind their backs and one shouting 'Nyah, stone blunts scissors', before promptly being beaten about the jaws. It all comes down to evolution, really, and *Age II* is as about as highly developed a game as you are likely to find. Its subtle differences from its illustrious forefather may be small in number, but they have a big impact. Where the first game was brilliant, if a little rough around the edges, the sequel has been buffed up to a glorious shine.

After a brief introductory

movie, you are immediately thrown into the usual opening menu. No doubt many people, most of whom will be familiar with the first game, will delve straight in by choosing a map, take charge of one of the 13 civilisations and start building with a few chums, whether they're online or artificial. To miss the single-player campaigns, however, would be a mistake.

Far from each separate mission being a cut-down skirmish-type game, in most cases you start off with a ready-made army

Unless you're a complete newcomer to this type of game (ie you're still trying to get your PC's foot pedal to work), I would avoid the William Wallace training campaign and plump straight for the Joan Of Arc series of missions. Whatever campaign you choose, you will notice straight away that far from each separate mission being a cut-down version of the skirmish-type of game, where you just build a base of operations and hunt down the foe, in

most cases you start off with a ready-made army prepared for battle. You'll notice, too, that each mission has its own graphics, unique buildings and many scripted elements, as well as a historic background for you to lose yourself in. You will often march into a pitched battle between two massive armies, and although you won't be able to join in, you'll certainly want to watch.

made army prepared for battle. You'll notice, too, that each mission has its own graphics, unique buildings and many scripted elements, as well as a historic background for you to lose yourself in. You will often march into a pitched battle between two massive armies, and although you won't be able to join in, you'll certainly want to watch.

It has to be said that some missions are very craftily written. I was stuck for a couple of hours on one where two British tribes were attacking my city and I had to destroy one of their castles. Waging a war on two fronts, as you know, is pretty tricky. How, then, to keep one enemy at bay while taking on the other? I figured it out in the end. *Age II* is not always about brute force – you need at least half a brain as well. Thankfully, one half of mine is still active, if a little slow.

KNIGHT LORE

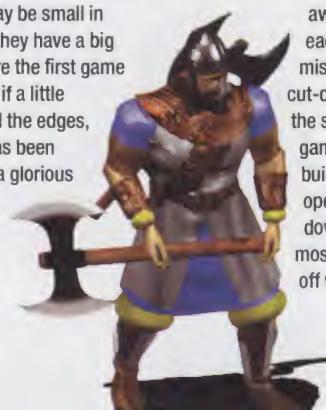
Whether you play a full campaign, where your objectives are obvious and the means to achieve them

are limited, or a deathmatch or random game where the scope is much broader, what is essentially so *right* about *Age II* is the balance of each of the units. Laying siege to an enemy settlement isn't just about planting a line of trebuchets or bombardiers and pounding a wall into the ground. Enemy archers, garrisoned in guard towers will make short work of them. Then

there's the knights streaming around the corner to worry about.

There are so many subtle strategies that come into play that every assault runs the risk of facing a successful counter. You can't be sure of anything. Just to illustrate this, there are 19 different infantry units, some of which are unique to the various races, but each is a specialist to some degree.

Add to that the option to upgrade armour, strength and weaponry, and the fact that each race has its own innate strengths, and you can see that to get good at any one strategy with one particular race could take a great deal of time.



What has always lifted the *Empires* games above the norm has been the research elements. Churning out village idiots armed with sharp sticks is of no use if you come face to face with a bunch of finely-tailored infantrymen packing 'hand cannons'. Unless you can counter them with sheer weight of numbers, you'll need to get researching. To get your hand on Hand Cannoneers (assuming you've picked a race that can build them), you'll need to research chemistry, which means you'll have to have built a university in the Castle Age.

Not all research is military in nature, of course. One of the first buildings you'll assemble will be a mill to store food, allowing you to build a market once you advance to the Feudal Age, allowing you the benefit of trade. There are many more technologies available than in the first game: various types of armour, specific skills that boost particular units or extend their capabilities, and all the while you are building various units in the full knowledge that everything has a price, be it in gold, food, stone or wood. In short, every element in the game – collecting, building, fighting, researching – is integrated almost seamlessly into one big gaming ball of loveliness.

A NEW AGE

Some people have been critical of the computer AI in *Age II*, being a bit dumb. For sure, it's not perfect, but you have to realise that the game is aimed at all levels. If you've played the first game for any length of time, you can avoid the two lower difficulty settings for a start. In fact, due to one fat, annoying bug, the computer player will give up minutes into a deathmatch game set on 'easiest'. At its most difficult, the game is insanely forbidding – one for those who can pull off countless keyboard shortcuts at the same time.

In multiplayer games, of course, there are no such problems. And as with the single-player games, there are countless strategies open to each player. Walls and buildings are now harder to destroy, seige weapons are susceptible to any kind of attack, and infantry units are easily decimated by archers. Rushing certainly isn't impossible, but it is difficult to pull off – which is how it should be.

With the graphics, I was a little disappointed with some of the animations, specifically the larger

units (ships and siege weapons) and their abrupt changes in direction as they traverse the map.

Perhaps my only *real* criticism is that the *Age II* is essentially an update of a two-year-old game. Many of the units are just ported over from the first game; the Monks, for example, who have the ability to convert enemy units to your side, are just a medieval version of the old Healers. And the long-drawn-out castle sieges that characterised the period are too fast-paced for my personal taste.

HISTORY LESSON

Whether you choose to invest in *Age Of Empires II* will depend on a number of factors. If you never liked the first game, prefer more action-orientated strategy, or – like Steve Hill – can't abide games where 'it feels like you're in a history lesson', you certainly won't find much to light your fire. If you wanted to be a real wanker, you could say this is merely *Age Of Empires v1.5*, to which I would say *Tiberian Sun* is just *C&C v1.1*. And I think many people would agree with that.

On the other hand, if you absolutely adored the first game and you aren't expecting anything radical from the sequel, you'll instantly find *The Age Of Kings* to your liking. As you play the game, you'll be constantly discovering little enhancements, all of which add up to a finely tuned and perfectly balanced game.

Overall, though, *Age II* pretty much covers everything you could want in a real-time strategy game. It's attractive, epic in scope and so endlessly varied that you'll still be dabbling in it two years from now.

As the genre starts to embrace 3D, *Age Of Empires II* is sure to be looked back upon as the last in a dying breed. Without doubt, it is the best and to miss it would be a crime for which you should be hung, drawn and quartered. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Easy to learn, hard to master • Excellent interface, detailed graphics and finely balanced units • Vastly improved single-player game • Bigger maps and countless new features

DOWNERS Unoriginal and perhaps too similar to the original game • Each multiplayer needs their own CD. Boo

90
Not too shabby

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT COUNT

What's new in *Age II*

NEW OPTIONS

When building units, you can set gathering points for each building, to which each new unit will rally when produced or 'ungarrisoned'. Even better, place the gathering point for your Town Centre on a forage bush and each new villager will automatically start gathering berries for you to stockpile in the nearest mill. No longer will you have to spend ages searching for slothful villagers, either. Click on the 'Idle Villager' icon and the screen will centre on any non-military unit that hasn't yet been put to work. Perhaps one of the best new features, for newcomers at least, is the option to pause the action at any time and take stock of the game. A quick stab at the F3 key and you can scroll around the play area, queue up orders and have a piss before resuming the action. Neat, eh?



Bone idle... must try harder.

NEW COMBAT FEATURES

As well as setting your armies to be either aggressive (where they go berserk at the first sign of the enemy), defensive (where they'll come back after chasing the foe for a short distance), or to stand their ground, you can also 'garrison' your archers and swordsmen in castles and barracks, so that from relative safety, they can rain arrows upon the advancing ranks. At the ring of a bell, villagers can now be summoned to the town centre, whereas previously they were vulnerable to attack. One of the game's niftiest combat features allows you to form your grouped units into various formations, with cavalry at the fore, pikemen behind and seige engines trundling at the rear. All grouped units move at the speed of the slowest, with the hand-to-hand units breaking rank at the first sight of the enemy.



Here you can see infantry in a square formation.

KING OF THE CASTLE

Reach the Imperial Age and each civilisation can finally build its very own castle, stick a few archers in there and be indomitable, at least until the siege rams come into view. Each castle allows you to create powerful rock-hurling trebuchets, as well as the one unique unit available to each race: the British have Longbowmen, the Japanese Samurai, and so on.



The flag's flying, which means your king is at home.

TRADE YOUR WAY TO VICTORY

Trading has been massively overhauled in *Age Of Empires II*. As before, once you have a ramshackle trading centre at the heart of your settlement, you can sell excess resources to buy those you are short on, with prices fluctuating accordingly. One new feature, however, is the option to build trade carts, Depending on the distance between your ally's trade centre and your own, these will raise your income of gold – a valuable resource as you build more 'high-tech' units. The same is true with docks and trading ships.



Trade carts need an escort to pass through enemy territory.

NEW GAME VARIATIONS

As well as the option to win by conquest, deathmatch games can also be won either by building a Wonder and defending it, holding a number of relics for a certain amount of time or a victory based on scores – which promotes trade, research and building. There is also a new game variant called Regicide, the aim of which is to kill off the enemy's king while defending your own. If you have problems finding the defenceless monarch, a click on the Spying icon will soon highlight his whereabouts – for a short time at least.



Your spies report that the enemy king is at home.

MULTIPLAYER ENHANCEMENTS

At last, you can save multiplayer games, which means that for many Internet multiplayers, epic month-long battles can become a reality. Recording games is another new option, with little effect on speed. Each hour will take up around 1Mb of disk space and you can watch the action from the viewpoint of any player, even the AI-controlled ones, so you see how stupid or clever they really are. But you can't record the single-player campaign missions, which is a shame because we could have recorded a walkthrough and put it on next month's cover disc, saving us the bother of typing up the words. Oh well.



Here's one we recorded earlier.

PHARAOH

★ £34.99 • Sierra • Out now

The nearest Steve Hill has been to a pyramid is using a fancy tea bag. Brew on...

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** Correctamundo



WHEN RIVERS ATTACK

Watching the tide a-going out and a-coming in



1 Farmers reap the harvest as the Nile thinks about flooding.



2 The farmland is irrigated by the filthy water.



3 Get back to work, you idle so-and-sos!

It came, it saw, and it conquered. *Caesar III*, last year's Rome 'em-up, proved to be one of the most addictive games of all time. Not content with replicating life in Roman times, the Impressions team has shifted their focus towards Egypt, land of sun, sand, slave labour and elaborate monuments. Despite the change of scenario, *Pharaoh* uses the same engine as its predecessor, a fact that has led cynics to label it 'Caesar III with pyramids'.

There's no denying that the basic gameplay elements are the same, and for those who missed out last time round, they go a little bit like this: faced with little more than a barren wasteland, you have to build a city from the

ALSO CONSIDER

Caesar III (Sierra, £34.99) The original use of the game engine, albeit in a Roman style.

PCZ #70, 92%

Sim City 2000 (EA, £34.99) The latest version of the original city-building extravaganza.

PCZ #74, 92%

Age Of Empires (Microsoft, £34.99) Combat-oriented historical shenanigans.

PCZ #54, 94%

them to slaughter ostriches, apparently the equivalent of KFC in Egyptian times. Food is stored in granaries and distributed among the masses via a series of bazaars. Ostrich with a side dish of ostrich isn't the most balanced of diets, though, and farming a variety of foodstuffs is key here. Farms can mainly be built in the flood plain of the Nile, and this is where *Pharaoh* differs from *Caesar*, as farms are underwater for a sizeable part of the year.

“A lack of fast food establishments is evident so you build a hunting lodge, enabling them to slaughter ostriches”

ground up, populate it, and provide a decent standard of living for your citizens, who will demand food, jobs, education, entertainment, protection, and all the beer they can drink. Religion also plays a major role, and various gods must be appeased through building temples and holding festivals, with failure to please them resulting in a blight upon your land.

So far, so Sim Ancient. You start by laying a couple of plots of land, some people move in and construct rudimentary shacks, and you give them a water supply so they can wash their arses. A lack of fast food establishments is evident so you build a hunting lodge, enabling

This means that enough food has to be stored to feed the populace for the remainder of the year – although, as a back-up, parts of the mainland can be irrigated with ditches.

IT'S JUST GONE NOON...

The flooding has a further knock-on effect, though, in that it leaves thousands of burly farmers with time on their hands. You don't want them worrying the livestock, and with no income support process in place, you need to find work for idle farmhands to do.

Job creation Egyptian-style is a world away from today's Restart schemes, though, and involves constructing vast monuments that will last for thousands of years. We're talking pyramids, naturally, not to mention the odd sphinx, or even a mastaba, whatever that is. The pyramids come in three sizes and even the smallest takes an absolute age to build. One of the good things about *Caesar III* was the fact that buildings could be constructed immediately, and this is still largely the case in *Pharaoh*, except in the case of the major

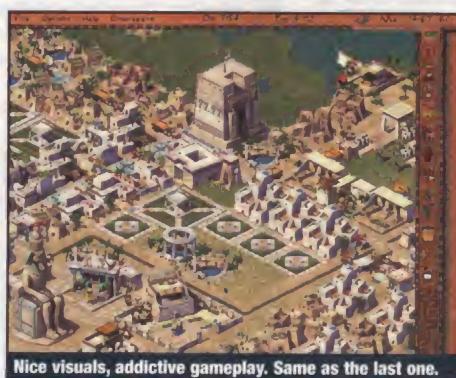
monuments. A sphinx has to be hewn from a rough chunk of rock, whereas pyramids have to be meticulously constructed block by block. It's an arduous process, and one that is exacerbated by the fact that just as you're making progress, your workers down



Statues improve the desirability of an area.



Some suspiciously Roman-looking walls keep enemies at bay.



Nice visuals, addictive gameplay. Same as the last one.



Naval battles add to the mix.

tools and go back to the more leisurely pursuit of farming. And when you finally do finish a pyramid, you then have to fill it with trinkets to accompany the deceased on his journey into the afterlife. *Tomb Filler*, if you like.

HALF-PAST MONSOON...

Other than that, it's business as usual. What begins as a couple of squalid homesteads soon grows into a vast, sprawling city as your life ticks by. It's certainly compulsive, although whether it's actually fun is a different matter, but the same argument can be levelled at many games.

There is definitely some



satisfaction to be gleaned from overcoming problems, although this is inevitably tempered by feelings of self loathing at having wasted hours of your life doing so. If you consider your time spent on earth as a life sentence, then this is one way of getting through chunks of it. That said, it's quite possible to leave the game running for a while and go about your business.

Other tweaks from *Caesar III* include the introduction of roadblocks, which restrict fire officers and so forth to a certain area. This prevents key workers from wandering around aimlessly while the city crumbles, which was one of the criticisms levelled at *Caesar III*. It does work in the short term, although once the city reaches a certain size it becomes largely impossible to keep track of things.



Skulls above houses indicate the plague.



Quarries provide stone for monuments.



ON THE BANKS OF THE RIVER NILE...

A further criticism of the *Caesar III* engine was the jerky scrolling. Sadly, this is still the case and over the course of a six-hour session it genuinely starts to wreak havoc with your eyes, leaving you with the slightly

disconcerting feeling that your head is caving in from the inside. If you can take the physical debilitation and the grossly anti-social aspect, though, there is certainly value for money in *Pharaoh*. That said, if you've never played *Caesar III*, you might as well just try to get that cheap. Roman times somehow seem more fitting, probably because the Egyptians never quite got round to invading Britain. With the whole flooding and monument issue to consider, it could be argued that *Pharaoh* is the more advanced game, although it could just as viably be argued that it's a pain in the arse.

Pharaoh is definitely a commitment, and sometimes you think you might be better off having a quick blast of *FIFA* and then going down the boozer for a skinful and a fight. But it must have something going for it to keep you transfixed for more time than is healthy, and if you fancy staying in, this will ensure that you do. Which is no bad thing, because, as everyone knows, there are people out there who can hurt you. □

PCZ VERDICT

1 UPERS Immensely addictive
• Graphics still look nice • Lasts for weeks

1 DOWNERS Jerky scrolling
• Essentially the same game

84 *Caesar III*
with pyramids



A wealth of statistics at your fingertips. Nice.

★ WALKTHROUGH

ONE PYRAMID, NO SUGAR

So you always wanted to build a pyramid? Pay attention – this is how it's done. For added realism, stare at each picture for an hour



1 Seems like a reasonable spec – let's put it here.



2 A rock base is laid, which has gullies cut into it.



3 These are then filled with water to determine a level area.



4 The water is drained and we're ready to build upwards...



5 ...Except the gaps have to be filled with rubble.



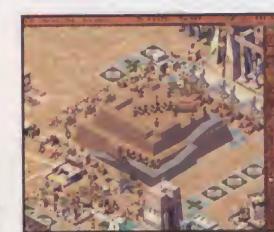
6 With the tomb in place, the first blocks can be laid.



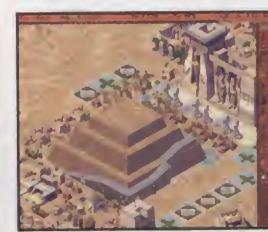
7 The first level is complete, which is nice.



8 Further levels are built using a special ramp.



9 Come on, put your backs into it!



10 Come back, you idle so-and-sos!



11 That's more like it... almost there.



12 Come back, you idle so-and-sos!



BATTLEZONE 2

★ £29.99 • Activision • Out December

Strategy and first-person action in one game? Nah, that'll never work, said Dave Woods, shortly before consuming his hat

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card
WE SAY Arm yourself with 64Mb RAM and you'll be flying high



Question: what's worse than slaving over a game and investing years of your life, only to discover that you've coded a load of pap? Ask Pandemic Studios, creators of the ambitious and universally acclaimed *Battlezone*. It was a damn fine game, and it received praise from all quarters on its release. So much so that the team must have been sitting

back, reading the lavish reviews, and waiting for their bank balance to start spewing out the rewards. Then they realised that for some reason, the game just wasn't selling. Thankfully, it did eventually develop a pretty strong fan base – mainly through some clever bundling with just about every 3D card that money can buy – and now the clever mix of strategy and shooter is back for a second run at the charts.

Seeing as most of you won't have had the pleasure before, we'll give you a (deservedly) brief recap of the shallow plot from the original. Back in 1952 a meteor

shower hit Earth, bringing to light a new substance called bio-metal. Everyone got really excited about it and went off in search of more of the stuff. Cue old Cold War rivalries between America and Russia and a load of commie-bashing and 'we are the defenders of the free world' type bullshit.

THOSE DUMB-ASS YANKS

Cue *Battlezone 2*. And guess what? Some dumb Yank decided to fuse man and bio-metal, to create a new species to help fight for freedom. Unfortunately, as with all Frankenstein-like creations, the man-machines turned on their human creators and in the face of this new threat, the two warring factions resolved their differences and created a multinational task force, the ISDF. Along with the hardest and brainiest blokes from each nation, the ISDF also contains the elite from shadowy organisations like

the KLA, Doomsday Militia, Jihad and the IRA. Which gives you the perfect excuse to go into battle all over again. It's not exactly the most solid storyline we've ever played through, but it does get better as you progress through the missions.

The game itself plays like the bastard son of *Recoil*, *Tiberian Sun*, *Descent* and *Quake*. You can play from either side (ISDF or Scion) and most missions involve building a base, scavenging for bio-metal and building up forces (à la *Tiberian Sun*), before going in with the troops, or guiding exploratory forages into enemy territory. The fact that you can play it on any level you want, and even walk around and into the buildings you construct, makes it all sound horribly complicated, but it's not. Pandemic has bent over backwards to make it a cinch to get into, even for strategy virgins. The first few levels take the form of an interactive tutorial,

where you follow a Commander around, executing simple orders. If you can get your head around basic *Quake* keyboard/mouse configuration then you're going to be as happy as Larry until you suddenly realise that in the course of a few hours you've just learnt all the hotkeys and shortcuts you need to order bombing raids, construct buildings, scavengers and recyclers, at the same time as controlling a first-person perspective craft in the front line of battle. The fact that it works, and works well, is all the recommendation you should need.

SILKY CONTROL SKILLS

As you'd expect, the interface has been tidied up from the first release. Almost every command can be accessed by pointing with your mouse and selecting from a simple on-screen menu. It does get a mite more complicated later

You can have all the strategy you want but unless you can handle yourself in a dogfight, you're knackered.



We created 'em, so it's up to us to get rid of 'em.





They say you should never send your men anywhere you're not prepared to go yourself. Whadda they know?



You can shelter in the tunnel system, but you can't hide forever. Cue demonic laughter.



“Battlezone II plays like the bastard son of Recoil, Tiberian Sun, Descent and Quake. You can play from either side – ISDF or Scion”

on, and it's easy to get confused when you're in the heart of a particularly brutal battle, but we're going to forgive it this time. Not everyone can devise a control system as good as



A whole wave of Scions and you're going in on foot. Are you mad?



If you're saving the world, you don't want to end up getting killed in an amorous clinch with a local. And it's been known to happen.

the one in *Tiberian Sun*, and considering the complexities of this game, the one on offer ain't half bad.

To help guide you round the mammoth outdoor levels, there's also an excellent navigation system that enables you to track almost any object on the map. First-off is the radar that shows you all friendly (green) and hostile (red) forces in the area. In first-person view you can position your craft and get distance read-outs for all major structures and vehicles. Get out of your craft and hit a satellite link and you can drop beacons to mark strategic points, which enable you to send troops or reinforcements to any point in the level quickly and easily. This is an excuse for a top-down view, which is essential if you're going to build up any sort of tactical agenda, before blundering in with a few craft and getting wiped out immediately.

Overall, we reckon *Battlezone 2* gets the balance just about right. It's not the easiest game to deliver, but it gives you an excellent dollop of action, and

enough strategy to convince anyone but the hardcore purist. It suffers slightly from being a hybrid in that there are better games in each individual genre, but that almost goes without saying.

DAMP SQUIBS

Looks-wise, *Battlezone 2* is absolutely stunning, and what's more, it's capable of conjuring up those huge outdoor levels and dealing with a large number of vehicles on-screen without slowing down – even on a system that's only got access to last-generation 3D cards. We tested it out on an original TNT chipset and we were more than pleased with the results.

But despite the inclusion of more lens flares than your average episode of *Babylon 5*, *Battlezone 2* doesn't always come up with the goods in terms of pyrotechnics. Destroy an enemy craft and you're treated to a huge flash and ripple effect, which is superb. Move forward to the first large-scale overhead bombing campaign and you're likely to be

hugely disappointed. We ordered our bomber into position and sat back, nursing a baked potato, but we were treated to absolutely nothing except a disembodied voice shouting 'Target Down!' and a small, round projectile (that could easily have been the contents of a flushed toilet on a commercial airline) that dropped and, allegedly, destroyed an entire base. Can we have our money back, please?

This failing points to an even bigger omission: atmosphere. Despite all the rollicking fights and the huge bases you get to fragment, *Battlezone 2* never seems to grab you in the right places. You never get the sense that this is anything except a pretty good computer game and at times you wonder why you're actually bothering. There's always just about enough to keep you going, but you can't turn off the lights and pretend you're in space. It might seem like a pretty harsh criticism, and *BZ2* might prove to be right up your alley, but it just didn't float our boats.

That's not to say it's boring –

far from it, in fact. We thoroughly enjoyed playing through the game, and dallying with the new multiplayer options that enable you to take charge of different types of vehicles and work together for the ultimate good. It's just not an undying classic.

DON'T WALK

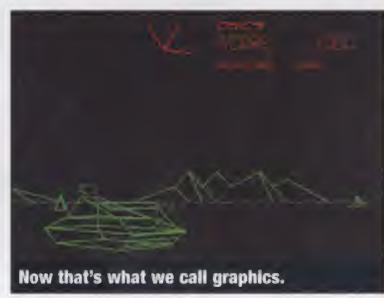
The lack of atmosphere isn't the only blemish, either. Some of the individual missions are too contrived and rigidly linear. At times you can't perform certain tasks until you're given the necessary orders and despite the epic feel to the levels and the missions, you can't help feeling you're getting shoved through the game in a bit of a hurry. Which is a bit of a paradox, because even in the middle of a great big scrap, the game never moves very fast. Get out of your vehicle and it's even worse: your character moves as sluggishly as the ZONE team following a binge at the local Thai eaterie. The developers are sure to argue that this is just realistic – your legs aren't going to carry you as fast as a souped-

LET'S GO BACK TO YOUR CHILDHOOD...

Everything's gone green, but don't worry – it's just a two-decade-old arcade classic

Battlezone 2 shares the name of the 1980 coin-op classic, but the similarity ends there. The original was one of the most innovative arcade games of its era, placing you in control of a ruddy great tank in one of the first-ever virtual 3D environments. Your sole aim was to whiz around a bleak landscape, blowing holes in other tanks and flying saucers. Everything was constructed from green vectors and the arcade machine itself simulated the inside

of a tank, complete with a periscope-like visor. The icing on the cake came from the ping of the radar as you desperately tried to swing your turret into position before getting one in the face. Scarily, the game impressed the US army so much that it commissioned Atari to build a specially modified version for tank training purposes. We reckon it's great for a quick blast, but a realistic training tool? All we can say is watch out for that friendly fire.



Now that's what we call graphics.

WALKTHROUGH

HARD HATS ON, PLEASE

Like *Tiberian Sun*, success in *Battlezone 2* involves building up and protecting a solid base. The only difference is that you can go in and watch it all happening around you in glorious 3D. Here's a Scion's eye view of proceedings



1 Everything starts with a Constructor. You can order it to follow you, and build all the different Scion buildings, as long as you've got enough bio-metal in reserve. The green box points to the placement of the building.



2 And voila! You can stand back and watch the miracle of building-birth. If you want to take a closer look, you can hop out of your vehicle and take a stroll round the construction site. When is Westwood going to give you this option?



3 You can actually get inside some buildings and access an interface that enables you to switch production or get a more familiar top-down view of the level. This is the superb satellite view and you can use this to drop navigation beacons and guide troops. Everything's still in real-time as well, so you can watch the action unfold.



Catch it and boil it alive – it'll go down a treat with a squeeze of lemon juice and some bread and butter.



You can change basic building settings by walking inside and accessing the interfaces.



If you're on foot, watch out for the nasty shards that spin off from exploding spaceships.



Eat a couple of those big mushrooms and you'll end up seeing the game like this.

up hovercraft. But it doesn't cut much ice when you're used to a forced-run from *Quake* or *Unreal*. And what happens to realism when your craft explodes, flinging you six miles in the air, only to float down gently and land, unharmed, on your feet? That's plain stupid, although admittedly it does lead to one of the best bits of the game – carjacking.

IS THIS YOUR SHIP, SIR?

If you lose your craft, you can hide behind a building, wait for the enemy to turn up, don your sniper rifle and take out the pilot with a single hit, leaving you free to steal the spaceship. Cool. There's nothing better than a single-shot kill, except maybe taking out the rest of the bio-metal creations in one of their own spaceships.

Unfortunately, this is about the only thing the sniper rifle is good for. *Unreal Tournament*'s effort would take it down with a headshot before you could crouch down and switch on the thermo-

nuclears. You can't pull in and out quickly to target anything, and unless you're targeting a static object, or a ship that's coming straight towards you, it's almost useless. Thankfully, the rest of your arsenal is more suited to futuristic fighting, with a load of guided missiles, mortars and solar flares to keep the man-machines on their toes.

Despite all these niggle little criticisms, we definitely reckon there's a place for *Battlezone 2* in your collection. If you're bored with bog-standard shooters, this one gives you enough to pretend you're actually doing something that takes a lot of brains. You're not, but then who gives a stuff? The strategy element of *BZ2* is as good as you can expect from a hybrid game like this, the action (when you're in your vehicle) is furious, at times relentless and hugely satisfying, and the AI is just about spot on. We can't help thinking there's something missing, but we still hope it shifts enough copies

to put the same amount of effort into *Battlezone 3*, because the concept seems to be getting better all the time.



This ISDF tank fools the enemy into thinking it's a new sort of Dyson.

PCZ VERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** Excellent FPS/RTS blend
• smooth engine • good variety of missions

⊖ **DOWNERS** Lack of atmosphere
• shiny visuals • sluggish at times

87 Not a classic, but really not that far off

ALSO CONSIDER

TIBERIAN SUN (Electronic Arts, £34.99) Not a whiff of originality, but still a damn fine strategy game.

PCZ #81, 90%

WILD METAL COUNTRY (Gremlin Interactive, £39.99) Enjoy tanks, but you can't be bothered with strategy? This is a half-decent blaster.

PCZ #77, 79%

BATTLEZONE (Activision, £9.99) The original blend of strategy and shooter is now available at a nice price. Try it – you might just like it.

PCZ #62, 81%

★ WALKTHROUGH

RECLAIM THE STREETS

You'll spend most of *Battlezone 2* cooped up in tiny ships and tanks, but every once in a while it's nice to stretch your legs and get a bit of air – you can get up to all sorts of mischief

THE VEHICLES

In 1980 you only had a creaking old tank to ride. Here's a small selection of what the 1999 version offers.



THE SCOUT

Your bog-standard hovercraft offers a combination gun/missile attack, but its light armour makes it very vulnerable.



JACKAL MORTAR BIKE

Fast and armed with long-range mortars, the Jackal is ideal for quick strikes against enemy encampments.



WALKER

Very slow, but devastatingly powerful, the Walkers are the ISDF's heavyweight hitters.

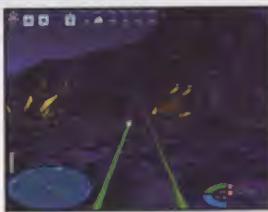


SERVICE TRUCK

Order one of these to follow you and you've got your very own mobile repair unit. Heavily armoured, but a slow mover.



1 There's an enemy formation coming straight at you and you're bored with dogfights. Nip out of your ship, hide and steady yourself with the sniper rifle. Aim for the red cockpit and let loose with a single shot.



2 With the pilot taken out, you can run across and nick the spaceship from under the noses of the rest of the formation. Not surprisingly, they panic, leaving you to take them out with one of their own. Justice.



Be very afraid of this hairy, flesh-ripping beast.

Holiday: Not now, Stranger, I'm busy.

The Stranger gets fresh with Gillian Anderson. Where's his hand?



So scary you could manure a field with its results.



Settling the bar tab the hard way.



A dreary, grim and blood-soaked 1930s room. It was the Depression, you know.



NOCTURNE

★ £34.99 • Take 2 • Out now

Who will protect the world from darkness? Mark 'Silent' Hill will, of course. As long as he can keep the light on

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 64Mb **WE SAY** A hefty P400 with 128Mb RAM and a 16Mb video card



Fear. An instinct evolved to protect us from danger and pain, it can turn a grown man into a cowering animal and seize all control over his bowels. Why would people pay to experience such a primordial and unpleasant feeling? Ask the millions who've turned *The Blair*

Witch Project into the most profitable film of the year. Or let us tell you: fictional fear is pure, exhilarating fun. As long as you can suspend your disbelief enough to enter its sick little world, good horror can turn the most upsetting things into a source of enjoyment and have you simultaneously suffering and whooping with joy. And that is exactly what *Nocturne* does. It is, almost without a shadow of a doubt, the scariest game ever to darken our PC screens.

LIGHTS OUT

You play the Stranger, the top agent for an organisation dedicated to keeping all

supernatural phenomena under control, usually by blasting it back to hell. Spookhouse is a cross between the conspiratorial world of *The X-Files* and the gadgetry of James Bond's Secret Service, set in the 1930s. And if you don't think such a setting sounds very scary, allow us to talk you through some *Nocturne* moments.

One, in the first episode, takes place in a German forest. The air is so cold, you can see the Stranger's breath making tiny clouds as he walks alongside Svetlana Lupescu, a half-vampire woman assigned to your mission. Rain falls through the leaves, owls hum their night sounds and bats swirl through the air. Svetlana tells you she can sense werewolves all around you and you start to see shadows flickering behind trees. You hardly catch a glimpse of their hairy forms, but you can feel their presence like the hot panting of a hound. Along the path there are trails of blood and an occasional corpse, and at every twist and turn of it you expect something to happen. Then it does. The enormous shape of five werewolves jumps out at you from nowhere and you start shooting wildly, wasting precious silver bullets while their growls mix with the sound of thunder. Your flesh is torn apart like paper and you have to recover for a few



"Got a bone to pick?"



British Rail's latest excuse for late trains.

ALSO CONSIDER

RESIDENT EVIL 2 (£34.99, Interplay)

A superb action/adventure that concentrates on zombies crawling through a city. It suffers slightly (mainly in the cumbersome controls) from being a PlayStation conversion.

(PCZ #75, 90%)

SYSTEM SHOCK 2 (£34.99, EA)

A different kind of game entirely but with the same sense of anxious anticipation. RPG, adventure and action combine for a classic of staggering depth.

PCZ #62, 95%

seconds before hitting the quickload key.

As with horror movies, to get the full effect you need to play it alone and in the dark. In fact, *Nocturne* demands that you turn your lights out and calibrate your monitor, which you'll need to do if you want to appreciate the graphics.

As long as your system is up to it, *Nocturne* is one of the most visually impressive games you're likely to see for some time. Shadows fall perfectly on



"I said no pets allowed." As you'd expect, the ticket-checker level is by far the scariest.



"That's how you end up if you eat meat. No, really."



"Zoos are cruel torture labs. It's a fact. But at least they've got toilets."

different surfaces and clothes move as if in a clothes-movement simulation, thanks to the engine's amazing (and processor and memory devouring) real-time lighting and physics. The recreation of the 1930s is remarkable, especially in the Chicago episode, where

tommyguns are fired from boxy black cars, shattering window fronts. There are shoot-outs in music halls and the city's architecture is recreated as well as any Hollywood gangster movie, but with the bleakness of *Seven*.

There are four episodes in all, the other two being set in Paris and Texas. This last one features

limbed zombies approaching in a slow-motion avalanche of distorted faces and hungry groans, you know you'll never sleep well again. Walking down one of these small village alleys is a daunting task, opening a door an adventure in itself.

STRANGER IS THE NIGHT

The adventure elements are, not surprisingly, very close to those in *Resident Evil 2*. You talk to loads of characters and usually need their help at some stage to move along, but the puzzles are fairly basic and secondary to the experience of fear. Which is why the character of the Stranger

Spookhouse headquarters, where you begin each episode. After you've been told about your next assignment you can choose to walk around and talk to people, like the Dana Scully lookalike "Doc" Holliday, who performs autopsies on monsters and provides you with goodies, or some of the other agents, who are also being sent on missions. It all hints towards a bigger picture and helps to establish the sense of a real world, rather than a string of missions strung together for no apparent reason. Real figures like Al Capone and Elliot Ness are mentioned in the Chicago level briefing and there's even a progression of years from episode to episode to give the Stranger's career greater depth. So what's wrong with it?

A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE

The greatest problem is that, because of the complexity of the lighting and the physics, the backgrounds are pre-rendered, rather than created in real time (in the same way as *Grim Fandango* or *Discworld Noir*), so you end up with weird, sometimes unhelpful camera angles. There are places

where you can walk away from the screen until you're a tiny dot and walk back until you cover the whole thing. One moment, you and your foes are as large as the monitor, the next you're in a Gauntlet point of view, before switching to a Lemmings take on things. Imagine the Coen brothers doing horror, or a Sam Raimi super-production, and you'll get an idea of how surreal it feels. It all adds to the disturbing aspect of the game, but it's still annoying when you're trying to kill a giant beast on the far edge of your screen. If you can live with it, *Nocturne* is a beautiful exercise in computer-generated fear. 

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Scary as hell • Amazing graphics and physics • Lots of variety in the levels • Great music • Gut-wrenching atmosphere

DOWNERS Odd camera angles • Needs monster specs

86 A scarring experience

SPEC OPS 2

£39.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out Now

The closest Andrew Wright came to a green beret was in the scouts, but he claims he got badges for hand-to-hand combat...

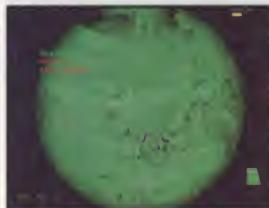
TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 200MHz or better **Memory** 32Mb of RAM **WE SAY**
At least a P266, 3dfx or Direct3D card essential. 64Mb of RAM

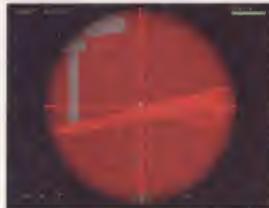


USE IT OR LOSE IT

Can't see the bad guys? We have the technology. Just press this little button here...



Most weapons have a night-sight which is handy for spotting warm objects in complete darkness. Like leaves and trees. Don't go on a night mission without one.



Better still, weapons such as sniper rifles come equipped with infra-red scopes.



Only bad guys wear masks. But for daytime missions, there's always good old Snipe-O-Vision.

If the number of 'military tactical simulators' is anything to go by, half the UK population thinks they could have joined the SAS. Yes, I know, you could have done demolitions and close-combat at college along with a GCSE in weapon skills. But you didn't like the hours, or the pay. Or perhaps you thought you'd meet more interesting people working in an office. Yeah, right.

The current crop of military tactical sims consist of first- and/or third-person shooters with an ultra-realistic slant, games like *Delta Force* and *Rainbow Six* or *Rogue Spear* where the developers have fallen over backwards to add unabashed realism, authentic weaponry and lots of strategic gameplay.

Spec Ops itself was the first of the genre, though it slipped downhill quickly after the WWII-based classic *Hidden & Dangerous* stormed ashore. Now *Spec Ops 2* has finally surfaced and judging by the list of improvements, it might well snatch back the pole position.

• You can choose the 'traditional' death match, team versus team, co-operative missions and king of the hill •

Spec Ops 2: US Army Green Berets is a very different game to the original. Instead of crass-looking, simple-sided wooden huts, you can crawl, scramble or run through the full range of interior and exterior settings from multi-level underground bunkers and ship cargo holds to jungles, deserts and even the Antarctic.

The first game didn't require a 3D card but *Spec Ops 2*'s Glide and Direct3D support makes a big difference. Lighting is now fully dynamic meaning that soldiers can be equipped with flashlights and the in-game searchlights and

lamps can all be turned off with an overdose of lead.

The graphics have been given a good working over in every department, with more of everything, from polygons, textures and colours to motion-captured animation. Soldiers now look and act in an extremely life-like fashion, thanks to the extra video work. Add to this a new damage model, souped-up sound effects and dynamic music – the mood of which changes according to events – and *Spec Ops 2* can be an almost movie-like experience.

There are six target areas on the body; the head, torso and four limbs. Head shots almost always kill, but you can wound an enemy if you hit an arm or leg. Shoot someone in the leg and they'll grab the wounded appendage, spurt some 3dfx-ified blood and stagger around. Hit them somewhere deadlier and they'll ham out a convincing 'I'm dying' routine.

SOLDIER SOLDIER

The mission timer has gone, thankfully, so you don't need to race against the clock, and there's more weaponry to play with, like the Neostead composite shotgun, the LR300 supergun and OICW shoulder rifle. Grenades and explosives have been revamped, with WP, HE, smoke and frag grenades available as well as the satisfying satchel charges and groovy grenade launchers. You can fiddle with weapons



Is that a rifle or a flame-thrower?



Er, no, I insist, after you Nigel.



That little red spot shows you just where the bullet will go. Roughly.

Hey, I got him, Lieutenant. Er, Lieutenant?





A nasty spot to get a wound...



No, sniper rifles can't see around corners...



Mission planning means choosing the right weapons for the job.

WALKTHROUGH

SOUNDS SCUD TO ME...

OK guys, we're looking for SCUDs today. They're big things with wheels, by the way...



1 In this mission, set in Pakistan, you and your four-man squad have to hunt and destroy several mobile SCUD missile launchers. The first step is to select a team and make sure you include a demolitions expert or at least a satchel charge or three...

use it to move around, but you can at least reassign all the keys to suit your style of play.

Not counting the four training scenarios, there are five combat zones (Germany, Pakistan, Korea, Antarctica and Thailand) with 25 single-player missions and three difficulty levels. Missions involve two, three or four-man squads and you've a choice of six soldier personalities, including demolitions, sniper, infantry, close-quarters, grenade or a machine-gunner, each with a slightly varying default AI. Snipers have a magnified cross-hair sight, infra-red scopes and night-sights while others can use binoculars.

MIGHTY MISSIONS

Clicking the right mouse button pops up a simple menu that tells individual soldiers to attack, defend or



Don't shoot. Don't shoot. That's me!

demolish the physical location you happen to be pointing at. If you want to take charge of them individually, you can swap between them with the Tab key. They even tell you things like 'enemy in sight' although it's usually only nanoseconds before they keel over with terminal lead poisoning. At least it is the way I play...

Perhaps the most welcome addition is built-in multiplayer

support with a choice of six different maps. You can choose the 'traditional' death match, team versus team, co-operative missions, team versus team missions and king of the hill, altering settings such as frag limits, squad size, and so on. Unfortunately, the multiplayer aspect is rather clumsily implemented and getting a network game going takes some considerable effort.

Take 2 has been banging on for ages about *Spec Ops 2*'s real-world physics and the masterly level of realism. They're right, up to a point, although the graphics can still surprise you when you find your soldiers lying two feet above ground and trees apparently rooted in mid-air.

Grenades are handled particularly well, although using them properly takes hours of practice. I was particularly proud of one 'kill' where I spotted some footsteps (*Spec Ops 2* soldiers always leave foot print trails, even on concrete) leading under a cliff out of sight below me. I dropped a grenade and bang, was rewarded with the message saying I'd killed a hostile. An unrealistic way to confirm a kill, but a satisfying way to do it. Oh and the grenades will bounce around corners, too...

Undoubtedly, we're talking about a major addition to the military sim genre here. *Spec Ops 2* looks and feels totally realistic, especially the way you can hide behind things like crests and crates. The weapons are ace, especially the grenade launchers, which can deliver death in large doses at a relatively long range. And the machine guns are pretty cool, too.

Gawd, we're right at the end and I've still got loads to say. Like telling you about the audio samples from real weapons, the real uniform textures, official

military tactics and authentic voice commands. I can't believe I left that out. And what about the silent kills with a knife that I haven't managed to do yet? Or even the overhead map? Admittedly it's pretty useless for planning because it doesn't show your objective, but hell, it's there.

The game's not without its problems, however, and one or two things have been badly implemented. Bodies disappear too quickly while bullets leave a permanent mark, even in sand and snow. The AI is also somewhat questionable. In my first mission I lost one man who fell down a steep slope when I told the squad to spread out. Durr...

On another occasion, one of my men suddenly decided to run straight at the enemy. Come on, he was a hundred yards away at the time. What the hell are guns for? I'd like to have seen an in-mission save, too, but perhaps that's just me.

For frustrated SAS wannabes – or would-be Green Berets, to be completely accurate – *Spec Ops 2* should be high on your wanted list. With an amazing level of realism and stupendous atmosphere, it's the yardstick that other such games will be judged by. And you'll just have to carry on regretting that you never joined up... **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Brilliantly realistic movements • Super-charged sound effects and music • Challenging gameplay • Integral multiplayer • Lots of individual soldier actions

DOWNERS Some weird polygon problems • Limpish AI • No game save • Clumsy interface

84 They don't get more realistic, but they do get better

ALSO CONSIDER

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS (Take 2, £34.99) Team-based SAS scenario set in WWII. The front-runner as far as we're concerned, but there's not a lot in it. **(PCZ #79, 91%)**

RAINBOW SIX: ROGUE SPEAR (Take 2, £34.99) Anti-terrorist scenario based on Tom Clancy's best-seller. More strategic planning involved in this one but the action's thick and fast. **(PCZ #84, 90%)**



2 Skulk around keeping a careful eye out for hidden enemies. This is where snipers come into their own. If they're properly handled, they can crawl around without being seen and take out enemy soldiers. The sniper rifle comes with a scope.



3 Aha, what have we here? Could it be a SCUD launcher? And a sentry on the hill next to it? Looks like another job for Hawkeye, then let demo man loose on the SCUD launcher.



The in-goal replay camera is a bit special.



Camera angles have been reduced to a more manageable four.



"Show us your bum or you're booked."



Beard City celebrate a rare win.



"Come on ref, you're havin' a laugh!"

FIFA 2000

★ £34.99 • EA SPORTS • Out now

Is it that time of year already? Seasonal greetings from Steve Hill

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P233 with 3D card

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED

Here we go again then. With the predictability of vulgar Christmas accoutrements appearing in the shops, another *FIFA* game is lapped up hungrily by a gullible public with short memories and deep pockets. EA Sports' traditional festive money-spinner has now become as much a part of the Xmas build-up as part-time drinkers, death on the roads and, well, another *Tomb Raider* game. However, unlike *Tomb Raider*, they can't simply change the location and pass it off as a different game. Actually they can, and did, with *World Cup 98* taking place in France, following hot on the heels of the superfluous *FIFA 98: Road To World Cup*. Last year saw the obligatory *FIFA 99*, and the general consensus was that they had finally got it right, the game proving the finest football simulation on the PC.

HOTEL GAY BOY

The obvious question then is where do they go from here? The obvious answer is that they make some incremental improvements and chuck in a load of new tunes. They have taken care of the latter, with a Fat Boy replaced by a Gay Dad, along with Apollo Four Forty,

Lunatic Calm, Junior Blanks, Elite Force, Sniper and Reel Big Fish. Household names in their own homes, the lot of them. And while it's not a deal breaker, celebrity Port Vale fan Robbie Williams has penned a track exclusively for the game. So exclusive in fact that it's just been on the radio.

As for gameplay tweaks, probably the most significant is the ability to shield the ball, which is useful for running down the clock or for holding up play while forwards make runs. More superficial, but still quite useful, is the display beneath the player in possession, with colour-coded arrows relaying the likelihood of making a successful pass. Set pieces have also been simplified, and you can now pass directly to

“And while it's not a deal breaker, celebrity Port Vale fan Robbie Williams has penned a track exclusively for the game”

one of three players by simply pressing the relevant button. Similarly, the same options are offered when defending a dead ball, with the chosen player being automatically marked by a couple of drone players.

COMPETITION TIME

As for competitions, a generic World Cup is offered, along with a Champions League and a UEFA Cup. However, a full league season incorporates all the competitions your team would be involved in, and even offers a rudimentary transfer system. Most major

teams are present, along with a number of classic sides replaying some nostalgic games portrayed with sepia-toned graphics.

The FIFA licence doesn't buy accurate facial likenesses, so only a token effort has been

ALSO CONSIDER

FIFA 99 (EA Sports, £34.99) King of football games for the past year, it's still a decent turn. **PCZ #71, 92%**

ACTUA SOCCER 3 (Gremlin Interactive, £34.99) Half decent, although chances of a fourth instalment are slim. **PCZ #72, 92%**

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 98-99 (Eidos Interactive, £34.99) The best use yet of the *World League Soccer* engine. **PCZ #76, 86%**

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL 2000 (Microsoft, £34.99) The new cock in the roost is as frantic as it is generic. **PCZ #82, 85%**

made, or in the case of Frank Leboeuf, no effort whatsoever. (The bald Chelsea defender sports a full head of jet black hair.) EA really should cough up and use real faces – you only have to look at their *NBA* or *NHL* games to see the difference it would make. The stadiums are also disappointingly

generic – why couldn't they have used those meticulously designed for their recent *Premier League STARS* along with the authentic crowd chants? (Especially as the rest of the game was rubbish.)

FIFA 2000 is undeniably superb, but we can't help feeling that somewhere they've got the perfect game. If they made it, there would be no point buying the next one though, would there? *Euro 2000*, anyone? **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Slick gameplay • Great graphics • Improved keepers • Real player names

OWNERS Awkward team management • Headed goals are rare • Generic stadiums • Muted crowd response • Mark Lawrenson

88 Same old, same old



Another contender for They Think It's All Over.



Guillemot

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The city sections are less fun than they sound.



Extreme Biker allows up to eight people to compete over LAN or Internet.

Look Dad, no hands!



Racing game cliché number 17: UFOs in the desert.



The indoor tracks are slightly more orthodox.



"Up above the streets and houses..."



EDGAR TORRENTERAS' EXTREME BIKER

★ £34.99 • Sierra • Out now

You might not have heard of Mr Edgar Torrenteras, but you can't avoid Steve Hill

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES 3D**
accelerator card **WE SAY** A P333, 96Mb of RAM and a 16Mb 3D card

For all the difference it makes, they might as well have called it *Terry Berry's Extreme Biker*. Torrenteras may be a big noise in a small part of Barcelona, but in any well-ordered society, having the name of an up-and-coming Spanish stunt rider on the box wouldn't help this game sell another copy. If *Michael Owen's World League Soccer* can't even trouble the charts, what hope is there for the boy Edgar? However, the success of *Extreme Biker* should depend solely on the quality of the game. It is therefore with regret that we have to report that the licence is the best thing it has going for it.

EXTREME MADNESS

Yep, it's a stinker. And if that weren't enough, it's a stinker in a genre dominated by one title that is head and shoulders above the rest. We speak of course of the majestic *Motocross Madness*, a game that was largely

farmer's field while being caked in agricultural produce. Nowadays it falls firmly under the banner of Extreme Sports, and is the pastime of bleach-haired pot smokers, along with BMX, snowboarding, skateboarding and surfing. *Extreme Biker* wears these influences firmly on its day-glo sleeve, from the obligatory Pepsi Max endorsement to the numerous clips of Edgar in action.

Watching a man fly through the air on a motorbike is undeniably an impressive sight. Attempting to replicate it yourself on a monitor is an altogether

"Crashes are commonplace and flout the laws of not only physics but also biology, with limbs bent at macabre angles"

responsible for bringing the delights of the noble art of motocross to the great unwashed. In less enlightened times, motocross was called scrambling and involved tearing round a

different bag, and *Extreme Biker* singularly fails to capture any of the thrill of the sport. Whereas *Motocross Madness* feels like riding a motocross bike (and yes, I have), *Extreme Biker* feels like

playing a game, and a mediocre one at that. The bike never really feels like it's in contact with the ground, the overall impression not helped by the fact that it casts no shadow.

EDINHO TORI AMOS

Track design is also a major bugbear, with an over-gimmicky approach proving tiresome.

Racing through volcanoes and across the rooftops of Paris might make for a good press release, but in reality it is less fun than you can imagine, proving wholly disorientating and near-impossible to remain on the track.

The stadium-based Supercross sections are mildly acceptable, but marred by the fact that if you inadvertently leave the track, you are left to find your way back with only the aid of a vague arrow. As for the stunts, the simple ones are pulled off via a single button press, with more complicated efforts executed by keeping a puck between two markers. Crashes

ALSO CONSIDER

MOTOCROSS MADNESS

(Microsoft, £34.99) The original and best, this still rocks big bells and has a promising sequel in the offing.

PCZ #67, 91%

MOTO RACER 2 (Electronic Arts,

£39.99) Generic motocross action allied with a passable Superbike section. Not great. **PCZ #73, 68%**

are commonplace and seem to flout the laws of not only physics but biology, with limbs bent backwards at macabre angles.

Not a resounding success, then. If you're interested in this type of game you should seek out *Motocross Madness*, and if you already own that, you don't need this. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS OK for five minutes • Sound is alright • You can pull wheelies

DOWNERS Overly gimmicky •

Disorientating • Shoddy presentation • Feels wrong

54 Motocross badness

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SEGA RALLY 2: SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

★ £34.99 • Empire Interactive • Out 15 November

Another Dreamcast game for the PC, and another review for Steve Hill

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb Voodoo or TNT 3D card **WE SAY** P300, 64Mb RAM and a decent D3D graphics card

It would appear that Sega have gone and done it then. The long awaited Dreamcast flying off the shelves like proverbial warm pies, despite the tiresome doom-mongering of numerous self-appointed experts. *Sega Rally 2* is one of the titles that has helped establish its success, and its early sales were bettered only by the outlandish adventures of a hyperactive blue hedgehog – proof, if proof were needed, that, if in doubt the general public will stick to what they know.

They of course know *Sega Rally 2* from the arcades, the huge cabinets providing the focal point of any well kept establishment. Generally surrounded by callow youths discussing the relative

merits of Honda Civics and Toyota Corollas, the main attraction is the eight-player link-up, providing many punters with their first true experience of multi-player gaming. Of course, it's no problem for PC owners, providing of course you have up to eight PCs or access to 'The Internet.'

So what else is different from the Dreamcast version? Absolutely nothing, although if

been drooling at the game's visuals on their shiny new console, to hardened PC gamers, they're really no big shakes. Obviously they look perfectly all right, it's just that we've become used to astounding 3D graphics, so they're not as likely to elicit as eager a response.

TEAR THROUGH

For those who've never stepped into an arcade and have deliberately looked away when confronted with a Dreamcast, *Sega Rally 2* involves tearing around a number of locations in the boy racer mobile of your choice. The tracks are categorised into Desert, Mountain, Snowy,

“The cars sound like high-powered hoovers, and pretty much handle like them too. They don't roll, and you can't reverse”

anything the graphics are better, the PC offering an 800x600 resolution. While PlayStation-weaned Dreamcast owners have

Riviera, Muddy and Isle, respectively recreating vague approximations of Africa, Corsica, Sweden, Monte Carlo, Indonesia,

and Spain, all standard rally fare. The cars sound like high-powered hoovers, and pretty much handle like them too. They don't roll, you can't look behind, and you can't reverse. Unlike your Dyson Upright though, they can be tweaked in terms of brakes, tyre type, transmission, gear ratio, suspension and steering. If you're not remotely interested in what goes on under the bonnet, don't worry – especially as the various settings don't make a great deal of difference and are used to make car spuds feel clever.

The game is instantly playable, and on the easier courses at least, driving largely consists of one long powerslide, with little recourse to braking or cornering sensibly. Whilst clearly not for the purist, it is still immense fun, and shaving crucial seconds off a lap time can be enjoyable. As for viewpoints, there are only two; a chase view that enables you to see your car, and the standard first person affair favoured by people who choose to play a la

ALSO CONSIDER

COLIN MCRAE RALLY (Codemasters, £budget) It's the benchmark for rally games on the PC, and that still stands.

PCZ #68, 93%

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP (Actualize, £34.99) 420 miles of lovingly reproduced British countryside.

PCZ #84, 82%

V-RALLY (Infogrames, 29.99) An overdue and lacklustre port of the PlayStation classic. **NOT REVIEWED**

BOSS RALLY (Largely dire conversion from the Nintendo. **PCZ #79, 58%**

virtual reality computer game style. Unlike the arcade game, *Ten Year Championship* is included, with further cars and tracks unlocked as progress is made. It certainly adds some challenge, and by about year seven you will have to be very good indeed to advance. Other cars do appear throughout the



Bridges and everything.



The split-screen mode does the business.



Radical air manouevres are all par for the course.



Go on then, step on it.



On muddy tracks, cars rapidly become caked in shit.

CHAMPIONSHIP

game, although they are simply obstacles, as it is all about lap times as opposed to actual racing. This of course changes in the two player split screen mode, and in the previously mentioned multi-player options.

HARDCORE ANAL

By default, *Sega Rally 2* is the best rally game on the Dreamcast. However, the PC is a very different bag and is currently swamped with a glut of rally games, including some superb benchmark titles. *Sega Rally 2* is a world away from the hardcore action of *Colin McRae*, or the anal authenticity of *Rally Championship*. It's arcade action all the way, and the co-driver's high-eyebrowed exclamations are the antithesis of misery *McRae's* dry intonation. They're fully in keeping with the ostentatious feel though, as is the ludicrous music and the sickeningly cheesy soundbite, "Game Over Yaaaaah!"

Arcade games aren't necessarily a bad thing though,

otherwise arcades would be empty and drug dealers wouldn't do a lot of business. But, clearly showing its arcade roots, *Sega Rally 2* is heavy on the 'one more go' factor and will have you frantically slapping the pad for another spin, untroubled by the prospect of having to throw another quid down the grid. The fact that you have probably spent thousands of pounds on a machine so you can sit in the dark and play games is a different matter altogether, and one that you will have to take up with your personal analyst.

Sega and the PC have had a chequered past, and have always been the most uncomfortable of bedfellows with the original *Sega Rally* being fairly moribund, despite its success on the doomed Saturn. It's probably a sign of Sega's turnabout in fortunes that the Dreamcast is flying, and they seem to have turned out a decent, if identical, PC game at last. Furthermore, *Sega Rally 2* proves that what the

Dreamcast can do, the PC can at least match without breaking into a sweat – although there was never really any doubt of that.

Ultimately, you have four choices. Show no interest in *Sega Rally 2* whatsoever and go about your normal business. Venture down to the local Happy Land arcade with a pocket full of bollocks and a wallet full of cash, risking your life at the hands of drug-crazed thugs. Go to a shop and fork out for a copy of the game and a Dreamcast in a big box. Buy this PC game in your normal manner. You decide. **PCZ**



As long as the skid marks are only on the road.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Superb graphics • Instantly playable • Variety of terrain
DOWNERS Only two views • Lacks any real depth

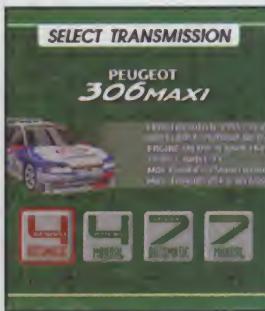
79 Arcade action in your own home

THE CAR'S THE STAR

A wider selection of cars become available in a performance-related manner, but here are some of the ones you start with. Take your pick.



CELICA GT-FOUR ST 205



PEUGEOT 306 MAXI



LANCIA DELTA HF INTEGRALE



LANCIA STRATOS



LANCER EVOLUTION



IMPREZA WRC



In the immortal words of Jim Bowen, "There's a light on." Or two.

TOTAL TIME
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LAP TIME
0' 29" 400
—
—
—
—

FASTEST LAP
0' 37" 388
CAR RECORD
1' 57" 126
COURSE RECORD
1' 57" 126



LANCER EVOLUTION

AGE OF WONDERS



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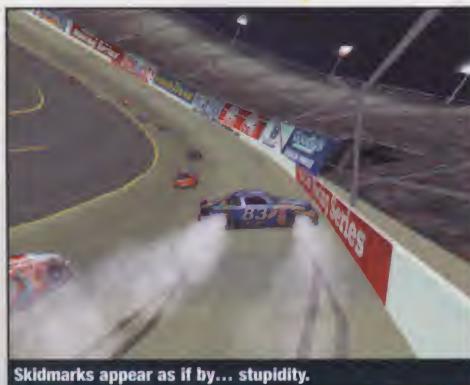
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In-car: just like *Days Of Thunder*.

A lovely pair at Bristol...



Nascar Racing 3 boasts camera angles galore.



Skidmarks appear as if by... stupidity.



The obligatory 'nice' intro movie.



Car detail is great, but the pit lane is very disappointing.

NASCAR RACING 3

★ £34.99 • Havas • Out

Papyrus is undisputed King of the unfeasibly realistic racing game. Challenging, but fun?

Tim Ponting goes round in circles

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** SVGA, 800 x 600 @ 64K cols **SUPPORTS** D3D, Glide, A3D2.0, LAN/internet/Serial multiplay, Force Feedback etc **WE SAY** PII 333 and 64Mb RAM, Direct 3D accelerator

I'll cut to the quick – NASCAR Racing is all about rings. Not around Uranus, but around doughnut-shaped racing circuits, and driving round them until your neck is permanently tilted to the left and your steering controller will no longer register a right hand bend.

ALSO CONSIDER

Nascar Racing 2 (Papyrus, £14.99) (It's on budget) Almost the same game, will run faster on lowlier machines, is available in a version with support for hardware accelerators – as good as, and at a lower price

PCZ #46, 92%

TOCA 2 (Codemasters, £34.99)

Touring Cars are much the same but turn right as well as left

PCZ #76, 93%

Sega Rally 2 (Sega, £34.99)

Blistering arcade run but as realistic as a badger standing for Parliament

PCZ #84, 79%

To some this is as interesting as a late night seminar on cat neutering, but to hordes of American racing fans who have beer can holders built into their sofa/partner's head, this constitutes edge of the seat stuff. And in all fairness, once you get into it, it's wonderful – not the rings, but the fact that a) you're travelling at speeds close to light, b) you're overtaking constantly and c) you can drive into other cars without getting 'sent off'. *NASCAR 3* is a development from, hang on, *NASCAR* and, and has all the hallmarks of the previous games – devastatingly realistic driving model, accurate tracks, pretty cars and grindingly wearing 500 lap races.

You can play either single races or choose from three different Championships. Just about everything can be tweaked – race lengths (even reducing the length to 10% of the real thing can give a twenty five minute pootle), track rules (yellow cards,

pace cars etc), realism (driving model and damage) and every conceivable aspect of car set-up. You have a choice of 28 tracks to drive on – most are ovals, but there are a couple of road tracks to test your mettle, including the old favourite Watkins' Glen.

REAR-ENDERS

With all realism settings cranked up, it's certainly a difficult game – remember how frustrated you were with *GP Legends*? However,

“...the most rudimentary pit land you can imagine. It's pants.”

NASCAR vehicles can survive a fair old rear-end battering without too much discomfort so, unlike many such games, it's not all over if you have a single lapse of concentration. You can even downgrade your opponents' cars to level the playing field as well – 97% is about right to give you the edge and keep your interest level up. Once you win a race at 100%, you can, and will, consider yourself God. And for pansies there's an arcade mode, though other arcade racers are still more fun and have superior playability.

The graphics are pretty if you have a meaty machine – 1024 x 768 with full detail ran smoothly on a PIII 500 with a 32Mb TNT2 card – but then it would. However,

the usual Papyrus design attitude gives detailed decals on every car yet the most rudimentary pit lane you can imagine. It's pants. A team of mechanics cut out of the side of a cornflake packet would look better.

Little is improved over the last version save sound (which is far better, fully 3D, and with great pit lane comments) and uprated graphics. The physics model is claimed to be improved, but I can't tell the difference, and in

hundreds of laps and tens of pile-ups, not a single car flipped – the dynamics seem locked in two dimensions, though they piss on every other non-Papyrus game from a height. Still, you can't deny that it's addictive as you crank your opponents up a percentage at a time towards that god-like 100...

MULTI BOTTOM-SHUNTING

Multiplayer options are well represented, with LAN and internet play (up to 20 on a fast server) and serial link, though we didn't have the chance to test these (it was great on *NASCAR 2*, so there seems little reason to doubt it won't perform likewise). But it's the obvious similarity to

NASCAR 2 that is its biggest weakness. I was hoping for all-new dynamics, with cars flipping like demented turtles, a pit lane that's worth driving into for a look, and perhaps one of those cheesy American commentators saying "He's looking for a liquor store! He's driving the wrong way round the track! What will sponsors Wal-Mart make of this crazy behaviour? He's not gonna get a ride next year at this rate!" Ah well, never mind.

Go and buy this if you haven't got *NASCAR 2*, prefer realism over fun and want the best American stock car game on the market. Otherwise, try a game where you turn right as well as left and don't need to develop an obsession to rival that of a philatelist. ☐

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great physics model • You can hit other cars and get away with it • plenty of tracks • sound vastly improved • tweakability • detailed cars
DOWNERS Round and round and round and round • not that much better than *NASCAR 2* • rudimentary pit lane graphics • I couldn't roll a single car

79 Limited appeal but challenging with dollops of realism

FREESPACE 2

★ £39.99 • Interplay • Out Now

Thirty years on from the original game, a silvery-haired Richie Shoemaker finds himself saving the universe once more

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D accelerator and 400Mb hard drive space **WE SAY** Wishful thinking. You'll need a P233 and 64Mb RAM



It was only four months ago that my coffee-stained, ash-strewn desk found itself supporting a brand new PC, a machine that now, thanks to the ever-increasing demands of PC gaming, is prematurely approaching early retirement. At the time I naively thought it would take years to fill its cavernous 10Gb hard drive. Now, just a few months later, I'm having to hunt down the smallest of text files to fit the next game on. *FreeSpace 2* didn't help matters. Needing a massive 1.5Gb on full install (I wouldn't have it any other way), it's ironic that a game calling itself *FreeSpace* leaves you none at all.

Still, I managed to find the room from somewhere and now the game, sequel to the best space combat game in living

sheer unadulterated excitement that takes hold throughout the 40-odd missions that makes *FreeSpace 2* such a joy to play. Even a game that could take you months to complete would be hard pushed to provide the same level of relentless chair-bound agitation. Of course, once completed, the question is whether you would want to try over again? I'm not sure I would, but maybe that's just me.

JACKANORY

Set 30-odd years after The Great War, *FreeSpace 2* sees you flying again for the Galactic Terran-Vasudan Alliance (GTVa). Since joining forces to defeat the Shivan incursion in the first game, the Alliance has miraculously managed to survive the three intervening decades, exchanging technologies, ideas and cylindrical meat products. Unfortunately, some human xenophobes see the alliance as a threat and have formed the

themselves are incredibly varied. You could be sent to escort a supply convoy to a jump node, when, unexpectedly, a huge battle group appears. Bomber attacks on your capitol ships are a particular highlight, shooting down slow bombers as they unleash their ordinance. When you shoot down your first missile – no doubt more due to luck than skill – you'll whoop for joy. Even more impressive are the assaults on Cruisers, Destroyers and Juggernauts – massive behemoths sporting beam turrets that can cut through the hull of the bigger ships like the proverbial knife through butter. Woe betide any fighter that gets in the way of these weapons.

CLOSE COMBAT

The style of *FreeSpace 2*'s action is much like that of a WWII dogfight simulation, only without the effects of gravity. It's close-up-the-arse action all the way. Buzzing around the hulking cruisers, flak guns track the enemy ships with human precision, while you slip through their jutting structures to line up your next target. Watching your wingmen form up alongside and pummel fire into the still sparking hull of your foe, you almost feel as if you are playing the lead role in *Star Wars*, *Battlestar Galactica*, or any one of a number of sci-fi films

no matter how well armed, will almost certainly get you killed. If you're in a bomber, you must make sure your fighters stay to protect you, while you target the weapons and sub-systems that will make your part in a mission a success. All very well and good if you do manage to exceed your objectives, but most of the time you won't. *FreeSpace 2* is nothing if not well balanced.

LET'S TALK GRAPHICS

It's no secret that *FreeSpace 2* uses the vaguely tweaked graphics engine of its predecessor. To some that may sound as if developers Volition have just created a mission pack and could have released this as a simple add-on. Perhaps they could have, but that would only have served to devalue the game. Even today the original *FreeSpace* towers above its peers in its graphical finesse, and yet *FreeSpace 2* looks even better. The textures may lack detail close up (very close up mind), but the explosions are still out of this world, especially as the great capital ships split apart. Fires erupt from damaged ships, electrical fires sparkle across damaged hulls and the arc of intense laser fire as two massive fleets engage across the void and will very likely have you running to show your kids/parents/friends (delete as applicable). Epic is perhaps the word I am wrangling for, especially in relation to the size of the battles and ships. Take part in one of the missions in the dense cloudy nebulae, where spacecraft emerge like ghost ships and lightning forks across the vast billowing expanse, and the tense atmosphere multiplies still further.

THERE'S ALWAYS A BUT...

FreeSpace 2 is not without its faults. Again, like any *Wing Commander*-style title, the game is a mixture of escort and assault missions, played out in the backdrop of a galactic war. If you've played through the original *FreeSpace*, you'll probably get through the first half of the sequel with a tangible feeling that

Sniffing the arse of a damaged comrade.

ALSO CONSIDER

FreeSpace – The Great War (Interplay £39.99) Soon to be released in 'Gold' edition, along with the *Silent Threat* mission pack, *FreeSpace* is basically the sequel minus the big ships, nebula missions and a few weapons. Go for the sequel instead, unless you see this peering over the top of the bargain bin. **PCZ #66, 89%**

X-Wing Alliance (Activision £34.99) Without the *Star Wars* branding, *X-Wing Alliance* doesn't hold a candle to either *FreeSpace* game. The pace is far more sedate, but what it lacks in excitement it makes up for in variety. And flying the Millennium Falcon just can't be beaten. **PCZ #77, 88%**

X – Beyond The Frontier (THQ £29.99) This title's a completely different kettle of fish. Although you'll be playing this until well into next year, the pace is so slow it's positively catatonic. But for depth, *X* just can't be beaten. *Elite* for the next millennium? We think so. **PCZ #82, 90%**

you've seen it all before. To be honest, originality isn't a problem. As you progress, the game gets better and better. When the war is over, you'll sit back and look back on a job well done. I guarantee you will have enjoyed yourself. Whether or not you'll feel that £40 is worth it for a few days play is another matter. If you are one of those people who is quite happy to do the whole thing again on a harder setting or determined to fulfil those secondary objectives you missed first time around, then *FreeSpace 2* certainly has weeks of playability – so feel free to add to the score. Me, I'm done. Time to think about freeing more space on my hard drive before *FreeSpace 3* appears. Frankly, I don't rate my chances. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Graphically still the best space combat game on sale • Tense action all the way • Varied missions, well-designed ships and engaging story • Superb online play – if you've got a fast connection

DOWNERS Haven't we done this all before? • Too many keyboard shortcuts • Over all too quickly for some

85 The most enjoyable intense space action game available



Seek and destroy NTF freighters – don't be too complacent, it's not as simple as it sounds.



Now that's what we call an explosion. And you can't even hear it from where you're sitting.



One of the biggest ships in the game.

THE GREAT SPACEWAR

Checking out *FreeSpace 2*'s online bits

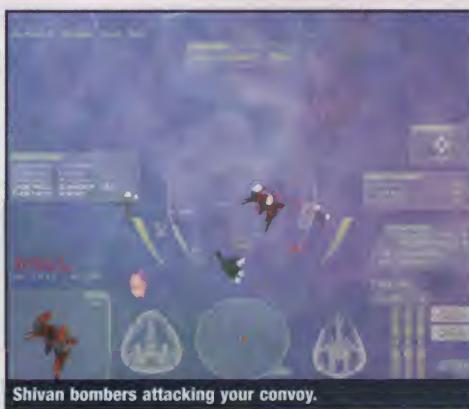
Reading through the manual, *FreeSpace 2* really does boast a frightening array of multiplayer options. As well as straight free-for-all deathmatches, co-operative missions and entire campaigns can be played out online. Get a squadron together and you can even compete in SquadWar, where teams fight over a number of galactic 'maps', vying for domination. There's even the option for real-time voice communication, speaking to team-mates via a headset, without the need to mis-type phrases and invariably end up vaporised. While a bog-standard 56K modem can just about handle a four-player deathmatch with all the graphical settings at minimum, you will ideally need a faster Net connection to play the game at full whack with pilots shouting down your ear. If you do have the capabilities, *FreeSpace 2* is without doubt the best online space game you can buy, dwarfing *X-Wing Alliance* by miles. I played a few games using more conventional means, and got kicked out with annoying regularity. No doubt the speed of the service will improve with patches, until then I would advise trying the demo, which is admirably well supported – and popular – on the Parallax site. Check out www.pxo.net for more details.



All wings going in on an NTF cruiser in a co-op campaign.



The fight does not go well.



Shivan bombers attacking your convoy.



Ring any bells from the first game?



Avoid the ship-destroying beam cannons like the plague.



Dozens of ships can be on screen at any one time.



Fighters need to take out AA guns to keep the bombers safe.

Don't play at being a hero. Be one.

You're in command of
the LEGO Rock Raiders.
These are your orders.

1. Go underground.
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3. Control formidable technology.
4. Explore hostile terrain.
5. Seek crystal deposits.
6. Take your team home safely.

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it's deep, dark and very dangerous down there.
Good luck!

LEGO Rock Raiders is available
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for your PlayStation.



ROCK RAIDERS



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new range of LEGO system
construction toys.
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URBAN CHAOS

£44.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

Paul Mallinson cleans up the streets

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 166MHz Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D cards **WE SAY** You'll have to turn the detail down to run it on the minimum spec. Also, play with a joystick

If you're the kind of person who suffers from Seasonally Adjusted Depression (or SAD as boffins have been known to call it), it may be advisable to stay away from *Urban Chaos*. Purely and simply because the whole way through Eidos' new beat 'em up action adventure it does nothing but piss down with rain. In fact, the weather in this game is some of the worst we've ever seen in a computer game... Rain, leaves, fog, puddles, soggy newspapers, more rain... It's enough to make you curl into a ball and hibernate.

LET IT RAIN, BABY RAIN

Urban Chaos is what you would call a stylised simulation of modern day 'cops and robbers'. Bullfrog offshoot Mucky Foot (the developers) have bent over backwards, snapping their spines almost in half, to bring us a fully

working 3D city with cars, pedestrians and realistic weather, and they should be commended for what they've pulled off. For starters, the place is huge (and we're not just talking about *wide* here, this city is *high* as well), and is densely populated with

You play D'Arcy Stern, a bad-named police officer whose current 'shift' is about to coincide with the turn of the new millennium. As expected, the entire city is in bedlam and you're sent out to keep the peace. And, this being the turn of the new millennium, there are some naughty goings-on with a sinister cult to investigate. As if everything else wasn't enough.

Control of D'Arcy is very much similar to that of Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider* – she can run,

targeting/viewing problems can often cause untimely deaths, and therefore much frustration.

SINGLE-PLAYER ONLY

Being a single-player only experience, *Urban Chaos* has to rely heavily on its storyline to keep things interesting and, in places, it works very well. As levels are completed and the plot unfolds, new areas of the city are unlocked with new missions, making the game seem well dealt out. Early on, you are given the

“The city streets are incredibly atmospheric (and are also home to the best rendition of a nightclub so far seen in a computer game)”

polygonal citizens and all manner of moving vehicles. At night car headlights refract crystalline shapes in the rain, the moon reflects in rippling puddles and volumetric fog moves out of your way as you walk through it... In short, the streets of *Urban Chaos* are incredibly atmospheric (and are also home to the best rendition of a nightclub so far seen in a computer game), and a pleasure to explore from the outset.

punch, jump, kick, climb, swing, slide, drive and arrest her way through all manner of obstacles and is subject to the same tile-based platforming laws as Ms Croft, which makes *Urban Chaos* a relatively pick-up-and-playable affair. The combat, perhaps too heavily relied upon in the game, is initially satisfying but quite repetitive in the long run. Access to bigger and better weapons does help, but general

chance to cause a bit of urban chaos yourself by playing as one of the bad guys. Overall, though, it has to be said that we've seen far better before – *Urban Chaos'* clichéd cop/cult/bent politician storyline seems dull and unimaginative next to the likes of *System Shock 2* and *Half-Life*.

MAGIC MOMENTS

Despite all this hamminess, *Urban Chaos* does have its

ALSO CONSIDER

TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION (Eidos) Similar gameplay, but – surprisingly – a better storyline than *Urban Chaos*. **PCZ #83, 85%**

KINGPIN (Interplay) Now infamous 'gangsta' glorification kept interesting by brutal violence and strong language. **PCZ #77, 92%**

moments. Driving around the city is fun (and yes, you can run over pedds, but it'll cost you penalty points), as is leaping from skyscraper to skyscraper, sliding down a 100-foot rope onto an unwitting pedestrian's head, or getting run over for the first time. In fact, *Urban Chaos* does have a very high 'novelty' factor – as you'd expect with a large, 'working' city to explore – but its long-term qualities are unfortunately questionable. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Superb level design • Amazing graphics and atmosphere • Brilliant soundtrack • Easy to play
DOWNERS Dodgy story and crap dialogue • Repetitive killing • Some camera problems • No multiplayer

75 Above average action adventure



It may not be *Midtown Madness*, but it's still a good laugh.



Who pulled the plug?



So many leaves... at the end of December?



Explosive soundtrack supplied by various famous names.



Zoom in for a closer look at your victims.



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Home cinema



SOUND



SPEAKERS



Digital

Digital music Internet
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GRAND THEFT AUTO 2

£34.99 • DMA • Out now

Charlie Brooker once stole a car and went crazy with it, ploughing down pavements and knocking old ladies around like saggy flesh skittles. No, not really. Ha ha!

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D accelerator card, Win 95/98 **WE SAY** Note that you *need* an accelerator card. Unlike the original, there's no software version. How so, DMA? Hmm? Hmm?

Grand Theft Auto 2 has taken rather a long time to get here, and it's a bit of a disappointment – but not in the way we suspected it might be. What initially worried us were early reports on the game which centred on an apparent shift in focus from present-day, urban car-jackings to futuristic, science-fiction gang wars. We envisaged *GTA* with hovercars and androids and hidden levels set on Pluto – silly *Fifth Element* stuff that would take the edge off the previous game's grittiness, contemporary air. "They're only doing that to make it seem less realistic, and therefore keep the censors happy," we thought, in a faintly sniffy we-float-above-

it-all-like-super-intelligent-brainiacs style.

We were wrong as heck. *GTA2* is set, in its own words, "three weeks into the future" – ie in a slightly exaggerated version of the present, not unlike the 'New Detroit' of the *RoboCop* movies. And rather than tone down the violent nastiness, *GTA2* chances its arm by cranking it up to fever pitch. The city streets are crueler, more anarchic and far, far more dangerous than before. Aside from countless dodgy geezers roaming the sidewalks (you now have to worry about getting car-jacked yourself), there are seven major crime syndicates 'running things', so you can't pull off a caper on behalf of one gang without stepping on the collective toe of

another. Piss off too many of the wrong people, and entire neighbourhoods suddenly become no-go areas, in which it seems absolutely *everyone* is trying to shoot you, all at the same time. It's like being a member of the Wu Tang Clan or something.

The 'gang war' stuff really does enhance the game, though. Nipping around town taking care of unpleasant and/or violent tasks, juggling allegiances

“Rather than tone down the violent nastiness, *GTA2* chances its arm by cranking it up to fever pitch”

with various kingpins, and simultaneously avoiding the police (more intelligent and therefore peskier than in *GTA1*), and trying to avoid the random criminal chancers you'll encounter along the way makes for a more complex and involving experience than the original.

But, Ah, yes. There is a but.

BUT...

The engine is pretty much exactly the bloody same! Standard 1999

3D-accelerator enhancements aside, little has changed, technically speaking. The handling of the cars feels a little crisper (which could just be our imagination), but apart from that, what else is new? Well, the cars have working headlights, and the sound effects have been substantially improved, but come on! *GTA1* was looking a little dated when it arrived, and that was almost two years ago. Why aren't there any polygonal cars

that crash and flip over? Why are all the roads still so straight? Why are all the buildings still so boxy? Why haven't DMA provided a means of reproducing the map (helpfully provided on paper along with the packaging) actually within the bloody game, so you don't have to pause and fiddle about each time you want to work out where the nearest garage is? That's an essential part of the game, so providing an option to bring up an arrow pointing you in

the correct direction – like the ones that guide you on every mission – would've been nice. Why didn't they?

We'll tell you sodding why. Because this is also appearing on the poxy PlayStation. Arrrrrrgh! That bloody machine's a *curse*, we tell you. Developers seem increasingly loath to include anything they won't also be able to squeeze into the PSX version – and that's why we're saddled with games that, although being fun to play, don't quite satisfy as much as they could because their growth has been stunted by that bloody grey box thing.

Don't get us wrong: this is a fun game. If you've never played *Grand Theft Auto*, we heartily recommend it. Enjoy the anarchic game play, the exhilarating sense of freedom, the utterly superlative blend of music and sound effects (for which the developers deserve a big fat shiny award). Enjoy it all. But if, like us, you've been there, done that... well then, *forget it...* unless you're a hardcore fan.

Next time, can we have a proper *GTA* update, hmmm? Or do we have to wait for the PlayStation2 version? Ah. Thought so. **PCZ**



Isn't that the Batmobile?



Bet they wished they hadn't gone for the cigar lighter option.



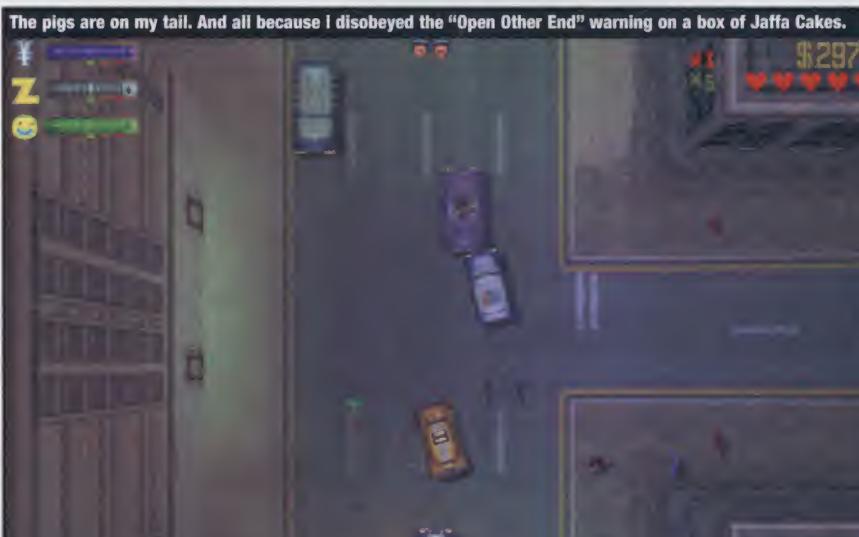
You get tanks, just like in *GTA1*. Better explosions, mind.

ALSO CONSIDER

DRIVER (Software Company, £34.99) Another PlayStation port, lacking true depth, but still lots of fun. **PCZ #78, 83%**

MIDTOWN MADNESS (Microsoft, £34.99) Probably the most fun you can have in a car, especially in cruise and multiplayer mode. **PCZ #79, 90%**

GTA (Software Company, £9.99) The original and the best. A real city with real crime rather than the sequel's overblown effort. **PCZ #58, 92%**



The pigs are on my tail. And all because I disobeyed the "Open Other End" warning on a box of Jaffa Cakes.

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Anarcho-fun • Fantastic, fantastic use of music • Futuristic setting doesn't harm the game play • More complex missions

DOWNERS Not much different from *GTA1* • Like, really not much different • We're not kidding • Blame the PlayStation

70 Oh no! More Lemmings

games made easy



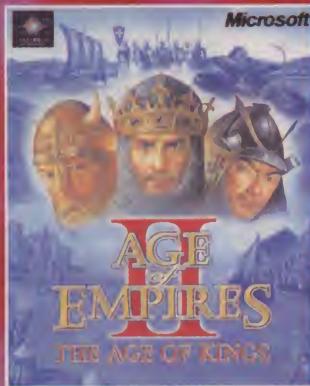
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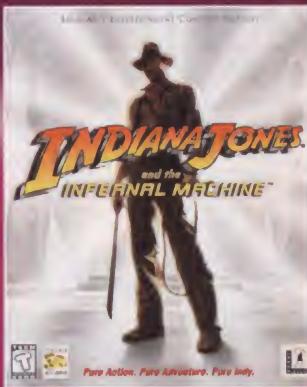
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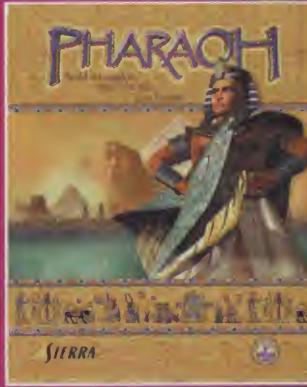
INDIANA JONES AND
THE INFERNAL MACHINE



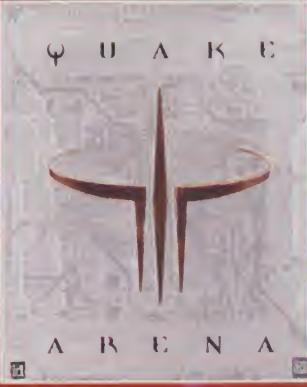
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★ £29.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out December

Back once again, the incredible Champ Manager. And Steve Hill

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P233 with 64Mb will bring you up to speed

PCZONE CLASSIC

If a week in football is a long time, then a year in football management games is a while. That's almost how long it's been since *Championship Manager 3* was released, shattering sales records and once more redefining the benchmark for football management simulation. We're probably preaching to the converted here though, as anyone who has ever been sucked into the wonderful and frightening world of *Champ Manager* will be only too aware of the havoc it can wreak. It is chronically addictive, and relationships, sleep patterns, and ultimately sanity all take a back seat to the *CM* God. Heavy users wear a thousand-yard stare and speak openly about events in the game as if normal people were interested, traditionally to be greeted by non-believers with a weary chorus of "It's not real!".

For those living in the twilight world of the *Champ Man* addict, it's real enough though, and many

ALSO CONSIDER

FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL

MANAGER 2000 (EA Sports, £34.99) Very pretty with some nice touches, but not really in the same league. **SEE REVIEW ON PAGE 111**

PREMIER MANAGER 99

(Gremlin, £34.99) A reasonable effort, but again lacking in depth.

PCZ #70, 72%

WORLD FOOTBALL MANAGER (Ubi Soft, £34.99) A moribund affair that has surprisingly spawned a sequel.

NOT REVIEWED

who once mocked soon find themselves worshipping at the altar. Opening that blue box is a genuine commitment, and one not to be taken lightly.

HEY GOO, WHAT'S NEW?

But you knew all that. Hardcore fans will only be interested to learn what enhancements have been made in this seasonal update. So read these words.

“Players can decide to leave the club in the lurch, or ‘Do a Carbone’ as it’s known”

Sixteen concurrent leagues will be playable – now including the American MLS – with competitions, awards, transfers and disciplinary rules updated to 1 October 1999. There's a quicker match engine with a greater variety of descriptive text, dragging out the tension further with debated penalties and so forth. The media now get involved, sparking transfer rumours, agent approaches and dressing room unrest, and players can even decide to leave the club in the lurch, or 'Do a Carbone' as it's known. Errant players can now be fined for a variety of reasons, and will respond accordingly.

Furthermore, players can now advise you of their reasons for accepting and rejecting transfer and contract offers. The scouting system has been overhauled, and scouts can now be assigned to individual players, clubs or tournaments, as well as ordered to find youth talent. Referees come under much greater scrutiny, with full statistical analysis of performances in different leagues, including red and yellow card count. Board interaction has been vastly improved upon, and requests can

be made for additional funding, improvements to the youth and training facilities, or even expansion of the stadium, the first time the series has ever dabbled in such things. Don't worry though, the emphasis is still firmly on football.

OLD RED EYES IS BACK

But that's not even the half of it, and space prevents us from going into the minutiae of the numerous improvements. Suffice to say it's a beautiful thing, and one that will have you bleary-eyed and uncommunicative for months to come. They're certainly releasing it at the right time, as there are few better ways of enduring the

ravages of another British Winter than shutting yourself in a darkened room and creating a footballing empire.

In the same way that you can only really support one team, you can only really play one management game, and you might as well have the best. The irony is that for all the money other companies spend on securing official licences, *Championship Manager* is universally perceived as the official management game. Buying a different one would only be cheating yourself. It's been said before, but after trying other management games, going back to *Champ Manager* is a return to calmness and sanity. PCZ

PCZ VERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** Unrivalled depth • Extraordinary realism • Innovative improvements

↓ **DOWNERS** Essentially the same as *CM3* • Destroys your social life • Makes you ill

92 It's not just for Christmas



Wonder if he'll be installing a disabled section?



With its stylishly muted design, *CM* is the BBC of management games.



Hurrah! Cup draws can now be viewed 'as live'.



Following a great football tradition, *CM3* now allows you to assign players whatever ludicrous nickname you fancy.



Assuming the speedluge position gives you a nice bit of thrust.



The Madchester revival starts here.



Taken busty blonde girl in game shock.

The backstreets of New York provide a unique challenge.

TRICKSTYLE

£39.99 • Acclaim Entertainment • Out now

You want tricks? You want style? You'll have to content yourself with Steve Hill

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 4Mb D3D-compatible graphics card **WE SAY** Seems about right

A recent perusal of any well-stocked newsagent will have revealed *Trickstyle* demanding a number of front covers from the slew of new Dreamcast magazines, while the PC version has slipped out largely unnoticed. Perhaps this is because it can easily be dismissed as a console game, or perhaps it's simply a measure of

the quality of games available for the PC. Whatever, it's here, and graphically at least, it's comfortably a match for *The Awesome Power Of Dreamcast*™. But we're not here to debate the merits of various systems, we're here to tell you whether stuff is good or not, and if you've already looked at the score you'll realise that *Trickstyle* is nearer the former.

If you haven't worked it out yet, boarding is the order of the day. Not your common or garden skate or snow variety though, but a new discipline descriptively known as hoverboarding. You can't get them in Halfords, but high street retail is a different experience in the 23rd century. Yes, it's a hackneyed futuristic scenario, as the screenshots might suggest. In summary:

some Japanese blokes invent anti-gravity technology, no-one's interested, said Japanese blokes flood the world using global warming, everyone's suddenly interested, hovering cities spring up, world order breaks down, nobody needs to work, boredom sets in, someone invents the hoverboard, a new sport is born.

BOOGIE BOARD

That sport comprises *Trickstyle*, and involves racing one of nine outlandish characters around three stylised cities. Despite its futuristic bent, *Trickstyle* is essentially a boarding game, and as such involves pulling off a number of fancy tricks, some of which will be familiar to

of extra pace, although by way of compensation controlling the board while lying on your back is more difficult. Conversely, the boogie drill position involves lying on your front, and enables you to knock opponents out of the way, as well as smash through sheets of glass without sustaining any damage. During races, various

“Trickstyle is a lot of fun. It might be little more than *WipEout* on a board, but it is very polished and has some original touches”

snowboarders, and others which have clearly been made up. A number of other boarding disciplines have had an influence, and during a race the speedluge position can be assumed for a bit

routes can be taken by leaping over obstacles and so forth, with *WipEout*-style speed arrows littered around the courses.

Between races, there is the option to take on secondary



Don't try this at home.



A big jump sees the camera angle pan out for effect.



The start – not a very good one in this case.



Just mind those trees.



A boogie drill lets you throw your weight around.



The final race is rock hard.

challenges, such as riding through a series of hoops in a given time, or pulling off stunts in a special arena. Rather than simply offering a chance to show off, these challenges are actually useful in that bonuses can be earned such as a new board or a new trick which can be utilised in a race situation.

The races themselves are hectic affairs, and require a sizeable amount of manual dexterity to constantly change position and swerve around the various pitfalls, some of which can be fatal. The physics takes some getting used to, as unlike snowboarding or skateboarding there's no purchase against the ground, and no real way of braking other than cornering tightly or releasing the thrust key. A lot of swearing is involved as crashes are commonplace, although your race position can usually be recovered. It does seem a little contrived, as no matter how badly you mess up, you can easily catch up with the rest of the field and almost every race goes to the wire, with victory sometimes secured by hundredths of a second. However,

despite – or perhaps because of – this, it can be quite compulsive and will have you slapping the keyboard frantically for another go. Winning one race opens up the next one and it continues in a linear fashion, offering no great incentive to re-race old courses.

In the short term at least, *Trickstyle* is a lot of fun. It might be little more than *WipEout* on a board, but it is extremely polished and has some original touches. Even the generic dance music is listenable. However, its longevity is in doubt and with no championship mode as such it lacks much lasting appeal. An accomplished player will be able to get through the majority of the 15 courses within a couple of days, and the other challenges, while certainly well-designed and cleverly balanced, aren't necessarily enough to warrant a great deal of commitment. *Trickstyle* does what it does well, and for those with a limited attention span it's a perfectly good game. However, two weeks down the line it'll probably be tomorrow's chip paper. But that's console games for you. **PCZ**

ALSO CONSIDER

WIPEOUT 2097 (Psygnosis, £19.99) A stalwart PlayStation game, the latest version is almost identical and wasn't even released on the PC. **PCZ #52, 82%**

ROLLCAGE (Psygnosis, £34.99) Another decent console game that disappeared without trace on the PC. **PCZ #75, 88%**

SNOW WAVE AVALANCHE (UK Action, £29.99) A half-decent snowboard game that barely caused a ripple. **PCZ #76, 74%**

PCZ VERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** Looks dead smart • Loads of tricks and that • Some half-decent tunes too

↓ **OWNERS** No proper championship • Racing is a little contrived • Short-term appeal

78 Cheaper than a Dreamcast

IN THE CITY

The races in *Trickstyle* take place over three themed cities, each based on the real thing



LONDON

The Big Smoke of *Trickstyle* is an unlikely mix of old and new, with once-famous landmarks such as Big Ben and Nelson's Column dwarfed by shiny glass carbuncles. You also get to hover through the Underground and jump over double-decker buses. However, you still can't get a cab south of the river.



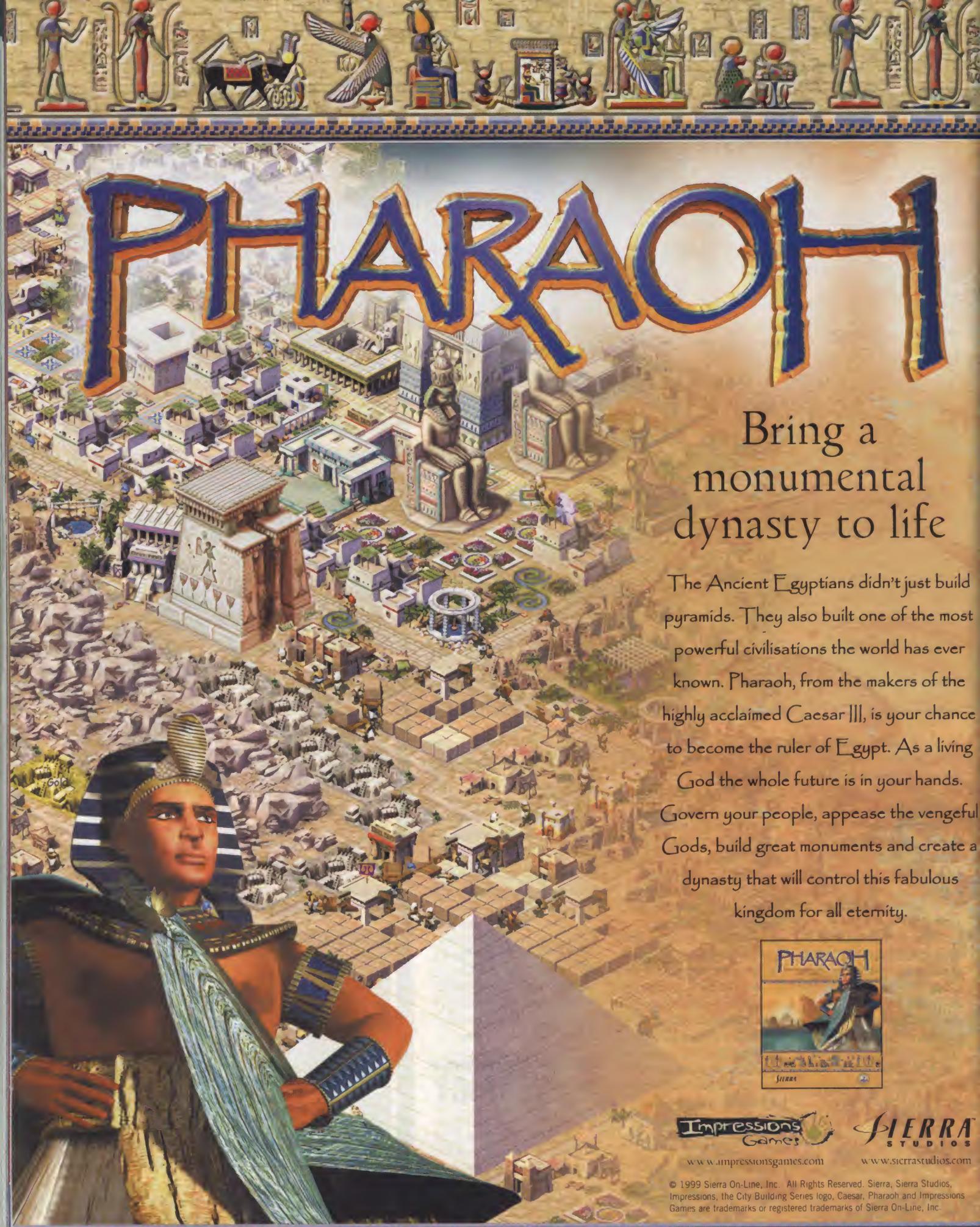
MANHATTAN

Vegetation now runs riot across sidewalks and up buildings, and the canopy of trees that covers the once vibrant city gives it a dark and foreboding atmosphere. Some day a real rain'll come and wash all the scum off the streets. In the meantime, *Trickstyle* takes in locations such as The Empire State Building, Liberty Island and Brooklyn Bridge.



AERIAL TOKYO

Nestled among the clouds over what is left of Japan, Ariel Tokyo is a masterpiece of engineering and design. Kept aloft by the magic of Sosumi Hover-Tec, it has become a haven for the famous and powerful. In the midst of the city lies the Tokyo Sky Dome, a mecca for every fan of hoverboarding (or so it says here).



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TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX ROGUE SPEAR

★ £34.99 • Take 2 • Out now

Andrew Wright couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery. The perfect choice then to review a team-based strategy game...

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb **SUPPORTS** All major 3D cards
WE SAY P300 at least for smooth play



Call them what you will, but squad games, military action games or even infantry sims have taken the game charts by assault over the last year. However, to many they're just a logical development of first-person shooters like *Quake*. Take the addictive, atmospheric gameplay and 3D graphics, add teams of individuals and a realistic strategy element and you've got the blueprint for titles like *Spec Ops*, *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six* and *Hidden & Dangerous*.

We loved *Rainbow Six* when we reviewed it a year ago (PCZ

#69, 89%) but the more recent *Hidden & Dangerous* has redefined the genre completely with a tremendous AI, excellent single and multi-player options, and super-submersive gameplay.

Enter that man Mr Clancy again with a sequel called *Rogue Spear*. This is no mission pack – it's an improved version of *Rainbow Six* with a new campaign storyline and its aim in life is to regain the high ground and blow *H&D* off the top spot.

FLASHBANG WALLOP

Rainbow is a counter-terrorist unit dedicated to rescuing hostages, defusing bombs and knocking off terrorists everywhere.

In *Rogue Spear*, you pick a team of up to eight specialists and kit them out with weapons

ranging from sniper rifles to submachine guns and shotguns, flashbangs, grenades and breaching charges. You then split them into fire teams and plan each mission step by step using a rotating 3D map. Missions occur in museums, city streets, aircraft and even on an oil tanker.

You do this by plotting waypoints. You can give your teams a range of orders at each waypoint and coordinate their actions using 'go' codes.

WHAT A POSE

Rogue Spear gives you more of just about everything, from blood

“There are ten new characters plus some meaty new weapons like the SPA shotgun”

and guts to deathmatch styles. Ten new characters are available, making 30 in all, plus some meaty new weapons like the SPAS automatic shotgun and the .50 calibre Desert Eagle handgun. New motion-captured poses have been added too, including the crouch position for snipers.

Better still, you can now run and crouch at the same time and

peek round corners without exposing yourself too much. Sniping is now a waypoint option and a real-time command – in the latter case you get a magnified crosshair for more accurate shooting.

The AI has been improved, although it's still not perfect. The terrorists react more logically and have more responses – they crumble, fall, stagger and even surrender when shot – but this game will never be a walkover. The terrorists can easily get the drop on you so be prepared to play missions several times until you get it right, despite the handy

replay feature, an excellent manual and training scenarios.

MORE IS BETTER

There are now eleven multiplayer match types, including Terrorist Hunt and Assassination. In single-player mode you get the chance to replay completed missions in either Lone Wolf (one man against the world) or

ALSO CONSIDER

SPEC OPS (Take Two, £9.99) Team-based special forces stuff in an outside environment. **PCZ #65, 88%**

HIDDEN & DANGEROUS (Take Two, £34.99) Team-based SAS scenario set in World War II. The front-runner as far as we're concerned but there's not a lot in it. **PCZ #79, 91%**

Terrorist Hunt modes (random terrorists everywhere). Other new features include joystick support and ballistic effects such as shooting through windows. The mission editor is a handy extra that lets you alter scenarios by adding extra terrorists and hostages.

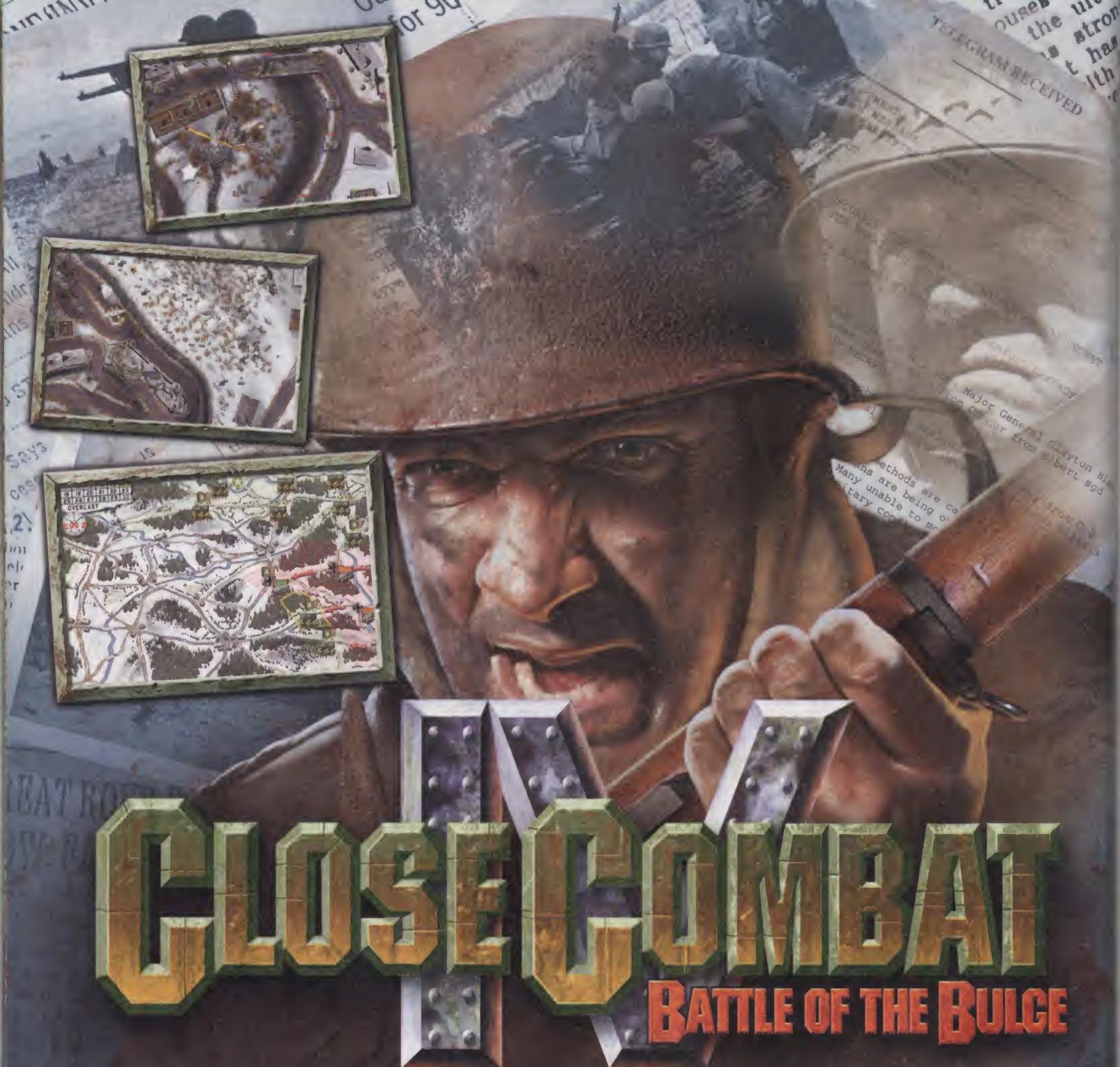
At first glance, *Rogue Spear* appears to be more of the same but when you add all the improvements together you realise it's a first-class squad game that should give *H&D* a real run for its money. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Slick interface • Good action/strategy mix • Compelling viewpoints

DOWNERS Average graphics • AI still niggly • Unoriginal scenery

86 Silly name, stupendous game



CLOSE COMBAT

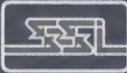
BATTLE OF THE BULGE

THE AWARD-WINNING REAL-TIME WARGAME SERIES RETURNS TO ACTION!

GAME FEATURES:

- ◆ New Campaign system allows movement of multiple battle groups on a strategic map of the Ardennes.
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- ◆ Through advanced AI, stress, fatigue and morale have a direct impact on your troops and they react accordingly.
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- ◆ Internet players will be able to use online matchmaking services to find opponents and start games.

"The Battle of the Bulge" continues the epic saga of the critically acclaimed and award-winning Close Combat series. Sneak attacks, stalwart defenders, spies and saboteurs are among the exciting surprises lurking on both sides of the battle. Whether you command American or German troops, you decide when and where they will be deployed. Launch air attacks against the enemy but keep your eyes on the skies; random weather patterns can wreak havoc on your offensives from above. History in the making is in your hands!



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WINDOWS® 95/98 CD-ROM

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Arcade mode lets you spar it out with other cars.



This is no time to admire the view, you big girl's blouse.



Everything bar the fluffy dice.



Wales, the dullest place on Earth. Croeso i Cymru, my arse.



Drive like that on a highway and you'd deserve to be called a raving maniac.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

★ £34.99 • Actualise • Out now

The Great British Countryside has never looked so good. Unlike Steve Hill, who's rapidly getting car sick

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P266 Memory 32Mb **ALSO REQUIRES** 8Mb 3D card
WE SAY A P450 with 128Mb of RAM and a 16Mb 3D card

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

P C owning rally fans have rarely had it so good. Having gorged on the feast that was *Colin McRae* (not literally), there's *Sega Rally 2* to get stuck into, followed swiftly by the extremely promising *Rally Masters*. It's the here and now that we're interested in though, and *Rally Championship* is right here, right now. In fact, there are some pictures of it on this page. Providing it isn't beyond your mental capacity, have a quick glance at them and then come back here.

Quite smart, aren't they? Almost photo-realistic, you could say. That's because some poor sod traipsed around some of the most barren areas of Britain taking pictures of roads. The fruits of his labour were then fed into the game using a special computer pen. He didn't actually

“With just the road to contend with, it really is seat-of-the-pants stuff, and enough to have you flinching like a moron”

have to walk, they let him use a car, and in fact reeled off a host of video footage while they were about it. They being the developers Magnetic Fields, and *Rally Championship* being their fifth stab at the genre to date, and their second to carry the exact same name. This is by far the

most realistic effort, and in fact it's possibly one of the most authentic driving games ever made, almost up there with Geoff Cramond's *Grand Prix* titles.

BOTTLENECK AT CAPEL CURIG
 In total, *Rally* features some 420 miles of actual road, spanning 36 stages of the British Rally Championship and taking in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, as well as that bastion of fierce inbreeding, the Isle Of Man. In that sense, it's the rally version of *Deliverance*. On the surface, having genuine tracks is a very good thing, although it shouldn't be forgotten that most parts of

North Wales, for instance, are inestimably dull (not to mention populated by mulleted thugs in snow-washed jeans). One stretch of Forestry Commission road looks much the same as any other, and if they'd made the whole thing up, few people would be any the wiser. Lord knows,

perhaps they have. A further side effect of having genuine tracks is the time it takes to negotiate them, with some sections clocking in at over a quarter of an hour. This might be all well and good when you're strapped into a real rally car, but on your own in your bedroom concentration can begin to wander, particularly with no other cars on the road, the arcade option notwithstanding.

FLOREAT INERTIA

Rally Championship is undeniably a magnificent-looking game, but fancy weather effects and picturesque scenery are only really for the benefit of spectators. It's how it feels to drive the car that matters, and of the seven camera views, the interior ones obscure too much of the road, while the chase views appear to be something of an afterthought, conveying none of the sense of inertia that *Colin McRae* pulled off so well. The only really satisfying viewpoint is the first-person bumper cam, or 'Pour Homme' as those who take these things seriously call it. With just the road ahead to contend with, it really is seat-of-the-pants stuff, and enough

ALSO CONSIDER

COLIN MCRAE RALLY
 (Codemasters, £14.99) Still remains the benchmark for rally games on the PC. **PCZ #68, 93%**

SEGA RALLY 2 (Sega, £34.99) A more arcade-oriented experience.

SEE REVIEW ON PAGE 90

V-RALLY (Infogrames) A lacklustre port of the PlayStation classic.

NOT REVIEWED

BOSS RALLY (SouthPeak, £24.99) Largely dire conversion of a Nintendo 64 game. **PCZ #78, 58%**

to have you flinching in your chair like a moron as you attempt to make up crucial seconds. *Rally Championship* is definitely a commitment, but one that will have you coming back for more. At least until *Colin McRae 2*. **PCZ #79, 84%**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Extreme authenticity

- Photo-realistic graphics
- On-screen Ordnance Survey map
- Nice weather effects

DOWNERS Weak headlights

- Unnecessarily solid obstacles
- Some unhelpful camera angles

82 Close but no McRae

Revenant's graphics have a touch of *Final Fantasy* about them.

Harry Ramsden would be proud.

REVENANT

★ £34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D cards **WE SAY** More memory smoothes the scrolling

Although *Revenant* has arrived at a time when PC role-playing games are at their strongest, it would be wrong to dismiss it as a bearded weirdy fly-by-night with nothing much to offer the average PC gamesplayer. Okay, so *Revenant* is a distant cousin of the original *Diablo* (which is now getting on a bit), and the game's designers have obviously played a bit of *Baldur's Gate*, but essentially what we have here is a professionally put together 'scrolling' adventure with enough depth to occupy anyone prepared to take it seriously enough.

Spells, wizards, swords and sorcery may never have been presented so 'hirsutely' in the past (except maybe in Garriot's worst efforts), but if you're willing to forgive the fact that the main character is called Locke D'Averam (of The House of Averam), and that the game is full of giant spiders that drop gold coins and chicken drumsticks when you kill them, then you can have a large amount of fun with it.

Graphically, *Revenant* is very refined. The isometric graphics are excellently drawn, and the interface is familiar and easy to get the hang of. The combat is real-time and draws more from the influence of famous beat 'em ups than from hard-core dice-rolling systems. The only stumbling block is *Revenant*'s storyline, which is trite and clichéd. Burnt out, ageing purists will scoff at the cheesy dialogue and dodgy voice acting, but those with thicker skin will stick at it and enjoy what is otherwise a highly competent role-playing game. *Revenant* is not going to change the world but those of you who like your 'cheese' will enjoy it.

Paul Mallinson

PCZ VERDICT

78%

CODENAME EAGLE

★ 34.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Out November

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 MMX Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 2Mb 3D card, four-speed CD drive **WE SAY** PII 300, 64Mb RAM, 8Mb 3D card and an eight-speed CD drive is more like it

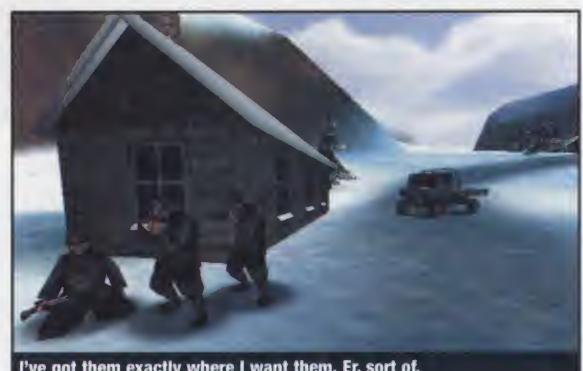
A mixture of *GoldenEye* and *Delta Force*, *Codename Eagle* is a 3D shoot 'em up riddled with several annoying features and bugs. From the incredibly cheesy and somewhat vague mission briefings, through to the dated and bug-ridden graphics engine, *Codename Eagle* on the whole fails to impress.

It's a shame, as the concept is a good one, and the missions are incredibly detailed, complex and even relatively entertaining. With unintelligent guards who stand around as though they're having a tea party (even when the alarms go off) further adding to the sense of frustration, *Codename Eagle* must unfortunately go down as being a game of missed opportunities.

Martin Korda

PCZ VERDICT

44%



I've got them exactly where I want them. Er, sort of.

LINKS LS 2000

★ £34.99 • Microsoft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P150 Memory 32Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Four-speed CD-ROM drive **WE SAY** P200, 32Mb RAM and 4Mb 3D card recommended

The latest edition to the *Links* series seeks to further extend the multitude of features and the excellent playability of the previous titles. *LLS2000* features single, double and triple-click swinging systems, but it's the accessible yet challenging PowerStroke method which provides the most amount of fun. The physics engine is solid, with ricochets and wind directions all accurately portrayed, and there's a powerful sense of realism to it all.

With six courses to choose from, you can then select one of 30 modes of play; and if this somehow

isn't enough for you, there's even an option to create your own. For the more ambitious there's a virtual tournament mode, with up to 64 players challenging for honours and ranking points.

But the game lacks several key features which those such as *PGA Championship Golf* (PCZ #80, 82%) have. Most notably – and almost unforgivably – it has no course creator, which is a major downside when there are only six courses. The game is still pretty and has plenty to offer, but it's beginning to look crinkly round the edges and has been replaced by several newer and better models.

Martin Korda

PCZ VERDICT

77%



Some of the best cartoon graphics ever seen in a French computer game.



They don't call him Rayman for nothing, you know.

RAYMAN 2: THE GREAT ESCAPE

★ £34.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards and 3D cards
WE SAY Can just about handle that

The original *Rayman* was one of those games you either loved or hated. Why? Because it was a surreal, French cartoon platform game with cutesy graphics and a ridiculous storyline. *Rayman 2* is one of those games you'll either love or hate too. Yes, it's the same thing all over again, but this time in full 3D, *Mario64* style.

Like its predecessor, *Rayman 2* is a devious mix of old-school platform levels, bonus stages, power-ups and puzzles – nothing too taxing, but involving enough to keep your average PG Tips chimp happy. And, like the original again, *Rayman 2* requires the patience of a saint and the reflexes of a true platform gaming professional.

Ultimately, *Rayman 2* suffers from the same problem as its predecessor: it's too goddamn hard for its ideal target audience, which is girls, children and families. But if you

don't mind the silly scenario or the cartoony graphics, and you're capable of getting our no-limbed hero from one side of a level to the other without losing all your lives, then there's much to be said for the game. First off, *Rayman 2* is immaculately presented: the graphics are wonderful, being something of a cross between *Trap Door* (remember that one?) and *The Teletubbies*, while the music soothes the ears with various renditions of Ry Cooder, Danny Elfman and Massive Attack's most memorable efforts.

The gameplay is more open-ended than something like Crystal Dynamics' *Pandemonium* (which *Rayman 2* pays more than a passing resemblance to in places), and it does have some memorable moments, but most people will probably agree that Ubi Soft have shot themselves in the foot by making *Rayman 2* too difficult for the nippers.

Paul Mallinson

PCZ VERDICT

79%



CREATURES ADVENTURES

★ £29.99 • The Learning Company • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P200

The game series that smugly boasts artificial life inside your computer is back. Not the second sequel, but one designed for a younger audience. Which means bold colours, an interface any halfwit could understand, and the easiest challenge since a GMTV competition phone-in. Stick it in front of your child and they'll be happy as Larry.

It's up to you to teach your so-called Norn how to act, through a system of reward and punishment. If it behaves badly, you spray it with cold water; if it does something good, you tickle it with your flying tickle stick (no, really).

The trick is to determine the fine line between right and wrong. With a little bit of tinkering you could even mould it to match your own personality, watching in dismay as it mirrors your own downward spiral into angst and alcoholism.

Only the most patient child is going to sit at a computer for hours while their Norn pisses about, and if they can do that they're probably better off playing something like *Age Of Empires* instead.

James Lyon

PCZ VERDICT

45%

PUZZLE BOBBLE 2

★ £19.99 • Virgin Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 12Mb RAM **WE SAY** Buy the Gameboy version instead

Let's state the most important fact about this review right here: *Puzzle Bobble* (or *Bust A Move*, as PlayStation owners may know it) is a truly fantastic game. On the face of it a graphically basic puzzle game, it's actually a masterpiece of game design – both easy to get into and as impossibly, infuriatingly addictive as playing *Tetris*. In two-player mode, this game is dangerously moreish; we've seen grown adults sitting in dark, smoky rooms playing endless rounds of *Puzzle Bobble* until their eyes sting, their skin shrivels, and they start to resemble desiccated zombies.

So why award *Puzzle Bobble 2* such a desultory score? Here's why: the PC version is a ham-fisted port of the PlayStation original, which first came out more than two years ago. The developers simply haven't bothered doing anything with it – it looks like it's running on a fairly racy emulator. It's slower (considerably so) than the PlayStation version, and it looks atrocious. The 640x480 resolution mode is simply a blurred version of 320x240 – enough to give you a headache, actually. And the animation is jerkier and clunkier than the PSX version, making aiming your 'bubbles' a laborious task. The overall effect is like trying to watch a blurry, shaky, shot-on-a-camcorder pirate video of your favourite ever movie: ultimately enraging.

Pay money for this abysmal conversion and you may as well phone up the publishers and ask them to come round and piss in your eyes. Thanks a bundle, Taito, you've murdered a classic.

Charlie Brooker

A great game rendered shockingly unplayable.

**PCZ VERDICT**

30%



As much complexity as you want.



Good graphics and bags of atmosphere.

ARMOURED FIST 3

£ 34.99 • NovaLogic • November

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P233 Memory 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** P266 and 3D card

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

When Voxelspace hit the market about a million years ago, it blew everything else into the weeds. It was fast, and gave depth even on fairly slow machines. However, it suffered from being very blocky close up, and the games which used it were crap. Voxelspace 2 came out a few years later, was heaps better and was attached to far better simulations. Trouble is, the rest of the industry had charged off with 3Dfx, and Voxelspace was left behind fast.

Enter Voxelspace 32, using Voxels where they work, polygons where they don't, and adding 3Dfx support. The result looks pretty good in screenshots, and bloody brilliant in motion. But as we've seen before, graphics don't make the game. NovaLogic have ignored the game's predecessors and made a pretty good stab at a decent tank simulator. You get as much complexity as you could reasonably want, bearing in mind that you have the workload of three men, a tank which seems to behave as you'd expect, good graphics and bags of atmosphere. The enemy AI has been improved to something above sub-normal, and various weather conditions have been added – you could find yourself fighting at night, in rain, fog or even snow. There are different environments, and some missions require you to think more than fight. The only downers are the lack of a real campaign – all the missions are preset, and your efforts earlier make no difference to the next mission – and the surprising omission of LAN support for multiplayer games.

Overall it's a good effort, certainly better than any other tank sim currently out there, and if it links with *Comanche 4* as suggested then this could well be the basis for the first real integrated battlefield on the market. As long as they sort out the multiplayer option, that is.

Simon Bradley

PCZ VERDICT

80%

PANZER GENERAL 3D

£34.99 • SSI/The Learning Company • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor PII 233 Memory 8Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3D card, 64Mb RAM **WE SAY** That's about right

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

Hex games are about as popular as an outbreak of myxomatosis at a rabbit convention, but *Panzer General 3D* is about to change all that. As its name implies, it's got spinnny-rotatey™ 3D, and some of the best graphics we've seen in any turn-based game.

Previous versions were based around units gaining experience and becoming veteran troops. This time round the game is based around unit commanders, so you can wean your fledgling squaddie up to a battle-hardened general, put him in command of the troops and go kill. Each leader has a speciality (tanks, planes, artillery etc), and if you stick them with their chosen subject all sorts of special abilities pop up (extra rate of fire, special bombing techniques etc).

The game offers a large number of scenarios and eight different campaign routes to choose from, so there's a huge variety of gameplay here. And, as with the previous ones, when playing as the Germans you get to invade America. Which is nice. The only flaw is that you're fixed to playing one side in each scenario, so you can't swap roles and rewrite history.

The multiplayer aspect works extremely well, with time limits so that you don't have to wait an hour for your opponent to play his turn. On the other hand, the lack of email play is a missed opportunity. Overall, this is one of the best turn-based games to date, although it's no classic in the great scheme of things.

Dan Emery

PCZ VERDICT

84%

CHESSMASTER 7000

£29.99 • Mindscape • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P150 Memory 24Mb RAM **WE SAY** That should do nicely

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

Having built up a considerable reputation and wiped out all the competition, the *Chessmaster* series has always been heaven-sent for anoraky and casual chess types alike. It may not be the most visually impressive game around, but chess is about mental prowess, not graphics. Despite all the boards and figures you can choose from, the best way to play is still the simple 2D set; amazing 3D graphics where you can turn the camera around and zoom right into the goose bumps on the Queen's nipples are useless.

The game's strongest point, the AI, is still the best around. Finding your own level of opponent and learning the intricacies of the 'sport' couldn't be easier. The question is whether there are enough new features here to tempt *CM 6000* owners; the answer is that there aren't. However, if you want the best PC chess game around, this is it.

Mark Hill

PCZ VERDICT

82%



Knight Jumps Queen, If you know what I mean.



Plenty of scenarios, including...



...invading America!



Some of the best graphics yet seen in a turn-based game.



An early finish for the Millennium Dome.

M25 RACER

★ £19.95 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM WE SAY A P233, 32Mb RAM and a 3D card is more like it

Renowned for congestion and tailbacks, the M25 might not seem the most obvious venue for a racing game. *M25 Racer* does what it says on the box though, enabling you to illegally race around sections of Britain's favourite motorway. And there's more. London and Oxford both feature heavily, as does the route between them.

Developed by Dutch outfit Davilex, their unique impression of England appears to have been gleaned from an episode of *The New Avengers*, the game being littered with rolling hills, red phone boxes and Range Rover police cars. The obligatory Stonehenge makes a token appearance, although druids will be upset to learn that it has been relocated to the Home Counties.

As for the racing, it's a fairly unrefined affair. The cars don't roll or display damage, and at high speed the road appears to buckle somewhat disconcertingly. Ultimately, it's a poor man's hybrid of *Need For Speed III* and *Midtown Madness*, both of which are available for a few dollars more.

Steve Hill

PCZ VERDICT

47%

FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL MANAGER 2000

★ £34.99 • EA Sports • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM WE SAY P233 and 3D card for match action

Whistling in the dark, or pissing into the wind. The choice is theirs. Other football management game developers is what I'm talking about, as trying to take on *Championship Manager* is the equivalent of going at a brick wall armed with a spoon – ie they might as well not bother. EA Sports have bothered though, and have clearly had a long hard look at 'The Daddy of management games', and its influence is clear to see.

What *FA Premier League Football Manager 2000* has over *Champ Man* (apart from a ludicrously long title) is match graphics, the games being played out using a version of the *FA Premier League STARS* engine, which is actually more suited to watching than playing. Highlights or a full game are offered, and while the latter might be a little lengthy for some tastes it's still perfectly watchable, with tactics brought into play on the fly.

Individual players can be given specific orders such as dribbling and long shots, and

these can actually be seen being executed in the game. However, the pop-up menus are fairly grating, particularly as they emit a high-pitched bleep when being utilised. Anyone who's ever owned a television or video that bleeps will sympathise with the mental torture that this can cause, and there is absolutely no need for it. There is also a smattering of provincial sloppiness throughout the game, including some appalling spelling mistakes.

As the name might suggest, *FA Premier League Football Manager 2000* is geared towards Premiership fans, with the lower divisions blighted by generic stadiums and sparse commentary.

If you simply want to take over Manchester United for a couple of hours, it's a perfectly playable game. If you want to ruin your life, buy *Champ Manager*.

Steve Hill

PCZ VERDICT

75%



Who better to make life and death decisions than...



Control a Battalion

Face the front lines in first-person, calling in airstrikes and commanding futuristic customisable vehicles, including tanks, walkers and hoverbikes, via a powerful interface.



Destroy Alien Scum

Take on morphing enemies with advanced unit tactics like choosing the best weapon and mine-laying. Instant action and strategy missions get you into the solo or online warfare.



Battle and Build

Use the terrain to your advantage on five completely 3-D planets. Form massive armies, construct bases and deploy your defenses across an alien solar system.

Battlezone® Critical Acclaim:

"an essential purchase for any PC gamer"
PC format 91%



"a modern classic."
Edge 9/10

EDGE

"PC Gamer weeps tears of joy at the birth of a genre"
PC Gamer 93%

PCGAMER



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ns in battle than a man in harm's way?



LEAD FROM THE FRONT

BATTLEZONE II
COMBAT COMMANDER

Bhunter for PC
High speed action blaster featuring
futuristic hover vehicles battling
above the explosive city streets.



SWEEP IS ADDICTIVE

Silkolene Honda Motocross GP for PC
Full on "thrills and spills" racing
experience of the Motocross Grand Prix
competition with stunning graphic effects.



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BUDGET ZONE

The fight for a piece of the budget games market is hotting up, and so is the need to re-review the titles on offer. Cheap classics get served up, but they're not all still the aces they were...

★ GAME, SET AND MATCH Mark Hill and James Lyon

THIEF GOLD: THE DARK PROJECT

★ £14.99 • Eidos Premier Collection • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P200 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P266 with 64Mb RAM and a 3D card

PCZONE CLASSIC It's not often that a game is released on budget that sports three spankily new levels and enhanced gameplay for the original 12, but that's exactly what's happened with *Thief*. Not content with correcting the minor niggles players found with the classic stealth 'em up (mainly that some levels weren't stealthy enough) in the forthcoming *Thief 2*, Looking Glass have gone back to the original game and tweaked all the knobs that could be tweaked. The result is an even more immersive experience,

more heart-stoppingly brilliant, with richer characters and harder enemies. The three new levels have been integrated seamlessly into the storyline and give a good indication of where the sequel is heading.

It's true that there should be a real modern-world thieving game where you get to break into housing estates and nick videos and tellys, but that doesn't mean there's anything wrong with a medieval fantasy setting. It's not really worth getting if you already own the original, but for first time players on a budget, *Thief Gold* is an absolute steal.

PCZ VERDICT

91%



This is going to be like opening a tin of beans.



CM 97/98: some football fans just insist on living in the past.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98

★ £12.99 • Eidos Premier Collection • Out Now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133 and 16Mb RAM

PCZONE RECOMMENDED It's only when returning to *CM*'s earlier incarnations that you realise how different, and how much better, *Championship Manager 3* really is. *CM97/98* won't shag its way to any beauty contest crowns and it won't tempt back players of the Collyers' latest creation, but it's still bloody brilliant. The one-season-per-night addictiveness is still there, sapping away your 'normal' life, as you sign that South American wonder you've been chasing all

season. And let's not forget the teeth-grinding joy as your team of highly-paid no-hoppers lose seven matches in a row and you're facing the sack. At least it's always fun to see how long it takes the Welsh board to fire Bobby Gould at the start of the season. The demands on your system are considerably less than *CM3*'s, but it does seem to have taken ages to make its way to budget. Thanks to the built-in editor, at least you needn't worry about out-of-date stats, as long as you're anal enough to spend a couple of hours putting every player in the right team.

PCZ VERDICT

89%

GRAND THEFT AUTO

★ £9.99 • Sold Out Extreme • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133

PCZONE CLASSIC With all the advertising fuss that's been kicked around for *GTA2*, it's a perfect time to go back to the original – and see how much better it is. Despite all the publicity *Grand Theft Auto* garnered for its violence, joy-riding and glamorising of anti-social behaviour, the reason it was a hit with the critics and public alike was that it was so much fun to play. On one hand, the top-down view and cartoonish

colours make it feel like a sophisticated toy (and make allegations against its unsuitability for public consumption preposterous). On the other hand, it's the fact that the city feels so real – you can even play it straight, obeying traffic rules like a good citizen – that makes it so much fun to be a criminal. If you haven't played it before and are considering buying *GTA2* on the assumption that it must be superior, save yourself a few quid and get the original and best.

PCZ VERDICT

90%



That's the only way to deal with traffic wardens.



Create Real Life on Your PC

creatures™

Even in a virtual world there's

REAL DANGER.



Windows® 95/98

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MINDSCAPE®
ENTERTAINMENT


Creature Labs

ROLAND GARROS 99

★ £14.99 • GT Value • Out now

TECH SPECS**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200, 32Mb RAM, 3D card

More arcade game than an all-out simulation, *RG 99* is not going to win any prizes as the most comprehensive tennis simulation ever.

Unfortunately, it's not going to win anything for stunning, addictive gameplay either. The fact that the developers released this on the cheap after the also average *98* version doesn't inspire any confidence in their product.

Any tennis fans who knew about Roland Garros' abilities before reading this review wouldn't be impressed. Anyone else would rather have their scrotum forced through the string of a tennis racquet than buy any kind of tennis game. All in all, a... What? You don't agree with me? Come here. Gnnnnngghh [Pop!]... See, I told you.

PCZ VERDICT**66%**

Girl-on-girl action at your fingertips.



He's going to fall over in a second.

WAIT FOR IT, THERE'S MORE...**DARK COLONY**

★ £9.99 • Sold Out Extreme • Out now

After an intro sequence so gory it makes *Starship Troopers* look like *Songs of Praise*, this turns out to be another average *C&C* clone, although more fun than most of them. No genre-buster, then, but worth a look at this price.

PCZ VERDICT**60%**

He's going to fall over in a second.

SMALL SOLDIERS

★ £14.99 • Hasbro Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133

Action figures: if they're not being used in some crude ritual of sexual awakening with Barbie dolls, they're being eviscerated by the neighbourhood dog. Maybe *Small Soldiers* is just the chance these victims need to gain some respect in the world. Or maybe it's just a way to cash in on another kids' film. Who knows? Who cares?

Relatively ignored on full-price, it's decided to sell itself on budget street, where it hopes its low cost will catch the eye of the undiscerning kerb-crawling gamer. Aimed at the younger market, *Small Soldiers* is an RTS lacking any of the complex strategic manoeuvres of *Tiberian Sun* or *TA*. The interface has been designed as simply as possible and the gameplay veers towards the arcade side, with health packs and power-ups to pick up along the way. Even if you were prepared to put up with its faults, all that could really be said is that *Small Soldiers* is an average *C&C* clone riding on the back of an average film.

PCZ VERDICT**72%**

Taking a dump requires three people.



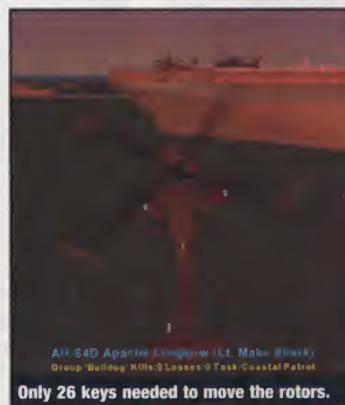
Trap ahead. What would you do?

APACHE/HAVOC

★ £9.99 • Empire Interactive • Out now

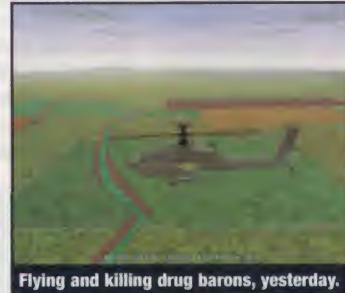
TECH SPECS**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P233 with 64Mb RAM and a 3D card

PCZONE RECOMMENDED Flight sims are traditionally the domain of hardcore gamers, capable of remembering a keyboard's worth of controls and figuring out how to get the damn things off the runway, or the helipad, as the case may be. *Apache/Havoc* is no different, apart from still being the best chopper sim on the market. The graphics may not be as wow-inducing as they were first time out, but it still looks the business. Which is exactly what you'll be doing as you zoom around the dynamic campaign in either the Apache or the Havoc, blasting things away and twiddling with the control panel. As with racing games, the ultimate test is how well the vehicles *feel* as they glide through the air and *A/H* excels in that area. So, if you're fed up with wings, go for a spin instead.

PCZ VERDICT**88%**

All 64D Apache Longbow (LT, Main Gun) Group: Bulldog Kills: 0 Losses: 0 Task: Coastal Patrol

Only 26 keys needed to move the rotors.



Flying and killing drug barons, yesterday.

EXTREME 3

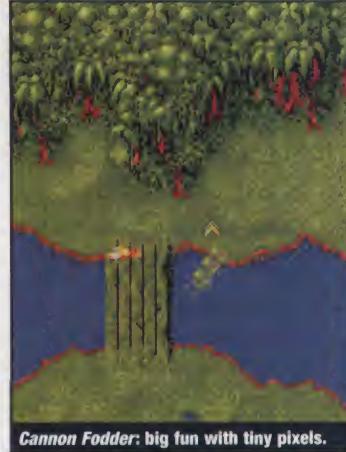
★ £9.99 each • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS**MINIMUM SYSTEM** Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P133 helps with *Actua Soccer*

PCZONE RECOMMENDED The popular *Sold Out* range is making sure old games live on in the age of 3D cards. If you haven't got a processor with warp capabilities, a card performing acrobatics over your motherboard and enough memory to store the complete works of Stephen King (well, at least the novels), you can relive 'the good old days' of three sprites on screen and, wait for it, original gameplay. These two collections bring you three games each: *Actua Soccer*, *Cannon Fodder* and *Toonstruck* on one, and *Atomic Bomberman*, *Worms* and *Screamer* on the other. While *Actua* and *Screamer* are best left alone, the rest all manage to bring a smile to the face and are still well worth playing. At 333 pence each, it would be a bit extreme to complain.

PCZ VERDICT**82%**

Atomic Bomberman: explosive multiplayer.



Cannon Fodder: big fun with tiny pixels.

PINBALL REVOLUTION

★ £14.99 • GT Replay • Out now

Two pinball games may seem like pretty good value, until you realise you only get one table in each. *Roswell* is based on '60s alien conspiracies and *The Avengers* proves far funkier than the film version. At least Emma Peel's in it.

PCZ VERDICT**58%**

He's going to fall over in a second.

ULTRA FLIGHT PACK

★ £29.99 • Koch • Out now

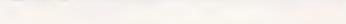
PCZONE RECOMMENDED *Flight Unlimited II*, *Flying Corps Gold*, *iF22 v5* and *F/A-18 Korea* are classics.

Warbirds and *Dawn of Aces* are online-only and are free on the Web. *F/A-18 Hornet 3.0* and *Ultra Fighters* make up the numbers.

PCZ VERDICT**80%****EASTERN FRONT**

★ £9.99 • Empire • Out now

PCZONE RECOMMENDED 'Hex turn-based strategy' may not sound like music to everyone's ears, but for enthusiasts this is the business. Perhaps not as appealing as the *Panzer General* series, but a good budget buy nonetheless.

PCZ VERDICT**82%**

FEEDBACK

Overwhelming praise for *System Shock 2*, outrage at *Driver* injustice and much more. **Keith Pullin** delivers the word

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in PC Zone over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, PC Zone, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

E-MAIL Alternatively, e-mail them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

REVIEWED Issue 80, September
SCORE 94%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "System Shock 2 is almost certainly one of the deepest and most enjoyable role-playing games we've ever played, requiring focus, skill and determination."

What you think

★ "System Shock 2 is the most amazing game I have ever played."

"It might be a little bit overwhelming at first, but once you get into it, it's brilliant. I think you underrated it – it should have got 98%."

Tim Crittenden

★ "I've just completed *System Shock 2* and it's the best single-player game I've played in ages. Everything about it generates terror and tension and there's a frightening lack of firepower at the start. This is one game where you can't charge through with guns blazing – every bullet is sacred."

Paul Kumar

★ "This game is amazing. The graphics are much better than *Half-Life*, and the RPG elements add to it amazingly. The hacking elements are brilliant and the character-building mode is great. The best game for a long, long time."

Peter Cranmer

★ "Forget *Tiberian Sun* and *Hidden and Dangerous*, *System Shock 2* is the game of the year. It has everything – atmosphere, storyline, gameplay and graphics. I didn't sleep for three days and now I'm playing through again. If the polygon characters were better it would have been perfect."

Kieran Mackay

★ "What's this? An RPG without stupid goblins and pricks in pointy hats? Well done to Looking Glass for proving beyond doubt that RPGs aren't just about pixies, elves and magic swords."

"This game completely engrossed me with its suspense and skill, and I defy anybody who



System Shock 2 has taken the gaming community by storm.

says they weren't irrevocably affected by it."

Chris SD

★ "What can I say? I live in awe of the greatest game ever – it's even scarier than *Alien Vs Predator*! If you have the right PC specification – buy it now! If you haven't – upgrade!"

Jeremy Eason

Comment

As hard as we try, we cannot find a dissenting voice on this one. Could *System Shock 2* truly be the ultimate game?

DRIVER

REVIEWED Issue 82, November
SCORE 83%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "In terms of *Carmageddon* style mayhem, *Driver* ranks low on the fun scale."

What you think

★ "I played *Driver* on the PlayStation and absolutely loved it. I normally agree with the ratings you give your games, but I can't believe you stuck a mere 83% tag on what is easily the most realistic driving simulation ever. I presume the main reason for this was the lack of multiplayer support that makes *Midtown Madness* great. With

a shame – but the absolutely brilliant single-player game more than makes up for it. Also, the additional sub-games, such as *Pursuit*, *Trail Blazer* and *Checkpoint Race*, ensure you just can't put it down."

"I really don't understand why you only gave it a 'recommended' status. It should have received at least 90-95%."

Paul Foxley

★ "Have your reviewers lost their bloody minds? Excuse me, but I cannot remember the last time I had as much fun on a PC."

"*Driver* is the perfect game – it's simply superb. There's boundless fun to be had, whether you play it seriously, or just for a laugh. *Carmageddon*'s cartoon frolics come nowhere near the hard-hitting realism of this work of genius. So come on – lighten up, boys."

Henry Steeman

Comment

We don't deny it's fun – it's just the amount of fun that's in question. *Driver* simply doesn't have the amount of missions that something like *Carmageddon 2* has. And yes, it does suffer from the lack of multiplayer support that makes *Midtown Madness* great. With

that in mind, do you really think you'll be playing it this time next year?

HOMEWORLD

REVIEWED Issue 82, November
SCORE 94%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "Homeworld's biggest asset is its ability to lose you completely in its universe and make you relish each valuable gaming moment."

What you think

★ "Homeworld is the most atmospheric and involving strategy game I've ever played. The graphics are fantastic and the music (especially in the opening levels) is so suited to the game, it must have been programmed by the big man himself."

"I became so absorbed, I completely shut off the world around me. The story, although tried and tested many times before, makes you want to complete the game just to see what happens next. Data discs and a sequel, please!"

Lee Walker

Comment

You're a bit weird, but you're quite right.

TIM CRITTENDEN CLEARLY ENJOYED *SYSTEM SHOCK 2*



Tiberian Sun: more of the same, but is it enough?

COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "Westwood have (finally) furnished us with a game of extraordinary depth and playability."

What you think

★ "Too easy by far. I completed it on medium setting within a week, whereas the games' previous two incarnations took about four months. The characters are crap too, James Earl Jones is thoroughly unconvincing and the guy who plays Kane is a total twat. Corny one-liners such as 'Let's kick some ass' and 'Dammit, Mac!' just don't do it for me. If Westwood had such a huge budget, they could have at least hired a decent script writer."

David Gareth Rees

★ "Tiberian Sun is a good game, but definitely not worth a classic. Come on – it's barely any different from the original. I seriously hope the immensely talented guys at Westwood aren't going to run this franchise into the ground by

releasing countless indistinguishable sequels.

"A better approach would be to concentrate on making original products and expanding gaming frontiers, rather than bogging themselves down in the pursuit of gold."

Niall Evans

Comment

There is still heated debate here at the office regarding the classic status of this game. All we can say is that you may notice a stricter approach to our reviews in the future.

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER

REVIEWED Issue 82, November
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "It's not for everyone, but for the Elite fan, frustrated for 15 years, X throws you into an alien universe rich with life and awash with atmosphere."

What you think

★ "X - Beyond the Frontier is graphically very pretty, yet it also has incredible depth and 're-playability' value. The only

downer is the talking, which is incredibly boring. Then again, it isn't quite as moribund or as messy as *Outcast*.

Charles Horwood

★ "The in-game clock tells me I've been playing for four hours, 20 minutes and 13 seconds – it feels like four years. *X - Beyond The Frontier* is the single most boring, tedious and repetitive videogame ever produced, forcing even the mighty *Pong* into second place.

"Nothing happens. There's no incentive to keep you playing, just the endless, boring, ever-so-slow build-up of funds. This game is dreadful. If I ever hear Chairman Keo wishing me "Good Profit" again, I'll murder someone. I don't understand how you managed to give it such a high percentage. I would have given it 50% and only then for the graphics."

Nik H

Comment

The thing with X is that you have to give it time. It's not like *Half-Life* or *Quake 2* or other FPS games, where you are basically led by the hand down a linear path to a particular goal. Instead, you have an

Some games take time to mature. X is one of them.



entire universe to explore, and actual decisions to make. So give it a chance, and that means playing it for a little longer than four hours.

LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 69%

What we thought

"The overall feel is that you're playing the damn thing on an emulator instead of a cutting-edge PC."

What you think

★ "I'm sorry, but your review of *Soul Reaver* was a farce. It's a great game and your reviewer was so adamant in pointing out that it's a PSX port that he said nothing about the great graphics or gameplay. It's also very original in parts, what with dimension shifting and the various ways of despatching enemies."

Big Dunc MacGregor

Comment

Original is hardly the word we'd used to describe a badly programmed *Tomb Raider* clone. As for not mentioning graphics or gameplay, if you read through the review again, unflattering comments on both these aspects are clearly evident.

PRINCE OF PERSIA 3D

REVIEWED Issue 83, December
SCORE 31%

What we thought

"Most games, no matter how flawed, usually have at least one saving grace. *POP3D* shatters that rule by having absolutely no redeeming features whatsoever."

What you think

★ "As a fan of the original games, I bought *Prince of Persia 3D* before you reviewed it and was utterly dismayed at what I saw. Why did it have to become a crap *Tomb Raider* clone when it could have stuck to the original brilliant 2D format? *Abe's Exodus* is a 2D platform/adventure game and that's done alright for itself."

Fryan Bent

Comment

Amen.

FA PREMIER LEAGUE STARS

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 73%

What we thought

"Many of the faces look like they've been freshly ironed, and the action is a stunted affair – a mutant hybrid of *FIFA* and *Actua*."

What you think

★ "I went out and bought *FA Premier League Stars* on release day in mid-August and was subsequently impressed. I was, however, shocked when I read your review. There is loads more depth to the game than just pretty kits and stadiums; the commentary is superb, and the option to export your team to floppy disk and take it to a friend's house is a great touch. Give *FAPS* a second look and you'll see it's worth more than just 73%. Plus, it was made by Brits, rather than a bunch of Americans who know bugger all about football. Surely that counts for something?"

Shai Vure

Comment

It probably does, which is why the end product should have been a hell of a lot better. Sorry, but the review is spot on – there just isn't enough content there to warrant a higher mark.

MIGHT & MAGIC VII

REVIEWED Issue 81, October
SCORE 40%

What we thought

"*Might & Magic VII* is visually offensive, with neither depth of gameplay nor a gripping, involving storyline to save it from total obscurity."

What you think

★ "Having played the *Might & Magic* series from four to seven, I have to disagree with your review. True, the engine is a bit dated, the character graphics are laughable and the pain sounds can get on your nerves quickly, but what you fail to mention in the review is that this game is full of those 'moments'. Add a massive amount of weapons, artefacts, spells and skills, and you have a gem of a game."

Jørgen Sørheim

★ "Was there really any need to write off *Might & Magic VII* so callously? The game looks outdated, I grant you, but as you well know, a game doesn't necessarily need state of the art graphics to be good. *MMVII* contains plot, depth of gameplay, atmosphere and a great combat system. I urge RPG fans to ignore your review and follow their hearts."

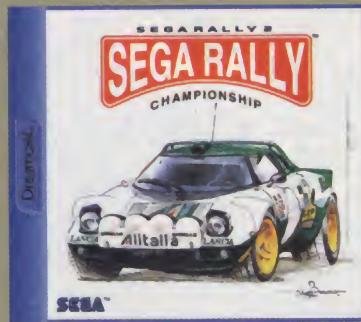
Andrew Flynn

Comment

Spoken like true RPG fans... Listen, the glaring truth is that RPGs have evolved. If you need further convincing, we urge you to play *System Shock 2*. Case closed. PCZ



Sonic Adventure
From Sega



Sega Rally 2
From Sega



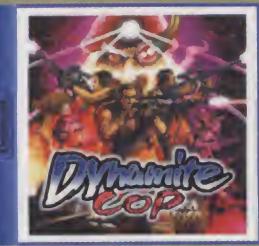
Millennium Soldier
From Infogrames



Monaco GP Racing
From Ubi Soft



Trick Style
From Acclaim



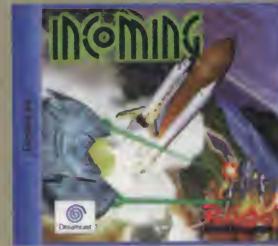
Dynamite Cop
From Sega



Powerstone
From Eidos



Blue Stinger
From Activision



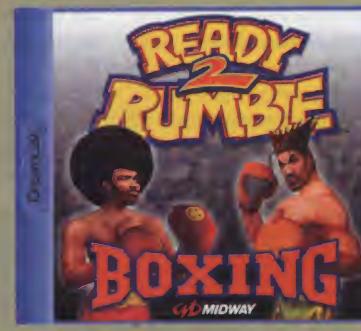
Incoming
From Rage



Tokyo Highway
Challenge From Crave



Virtua Fighter 3tb
From Sega



Ready 2 Rumble Boxing
From Midway



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Get a Dreamcast. Get some games. Get a jar of coffee – large. Play the strongest games line-up ever seen for a console launch. Racing games, adventure, sports and shoot 'em ups. Expect an early night somewhere around 2010. And there's a new game every week up to Christmas. 'Tis the season of late nights.

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player 1



player 2



player 3



player 4

It's going to be a *long night.*

3D CARDS: THE NEXT GENERATION



3dfx Voodoo3 3500



Diamond Viper v770



Matrox G400 MAX



Diamond Stealth SIII



Videologic Neon 250

Whatever your graphics needs, you're sure to find the solution here. The video card market may be crowded, but we're not confused. And you shouldn't be either.

Carlos Ruiz sorts the wheat from the chaff...

It's quite late in the day, but the third-generation chipsets have matured and their prices have finally settled at very reasonable levels. If you haven't already splashed out on a third-generation card (and we don't blame you if you have), now is a pretty good time to do so.

There are no less than five main contenders in this particular video card arena, and there is certainly something for everyone. Whether you want an out-and-out games card, a high-end card that delivers for work and play, or just a good mix of price and performance, you are catered for in every department.

3DFX AND THE VOODOO3 CHIPSET

3dfx (www.3dfx.com) stamped their authority with the success of the Voodoo and Voodoo2 chipsets, and looked set to do the same with their first mainstream 2D/3D solution. They certainly took their time releasing the whole Voodoo3 range – but they're out in the shops now, and this is what they look like.

The Voodoo3 2000 PCI is clocked at 143/143MHz, and has a 300MHz RAMDAC. Since this is the only PCI card in the Voodoo3 series, 3dfx have obviously intended it as a budget solution for older PCs that do not have an AGP port.

Next best is the Voodoo3 3000 AGP, which is not only clocked at a more satisfying 166/166MHz, but also has a higher RAMDAC speed of 350MHz. It also includes a good S-Video TV-out.

The top-of-the-range Voodoo3 3500 TV AGP goes even further. Performance-wise, it features a slightly higher clock speed of 183/183MHz, and the same 350MHz RAMDAC, as well as a TV-out. The



By far the best example of bump mapping so far: the fabulous water in Rage's *Expendable*.

main reason for purchasing a 3500 TV AGP, though, must surely be the multimedia treats that are included on it. A TV tuner allows you to use your monitor to watch all your

favourite programs, while basic video/sound capture capabilities are also present.

When it

mainly from variably faster clock speeds, and the AGP interface (where applicable).

The pitfalls of the Voodoo3 chipset have been well documented. You'll probably be aware that Voodoo cards have never had 32-bit colour – a thorn in 3dfx's side, which they will certainly address in their next outing.

Voodoo3 can only manage AGP2x (apart from the 2000, which is a PCI card), and the texture sizes it can handle are limited to 256x256 – small compared to the 2048x2048 of some of the other chipsets here. AGP texturing is also absent – a feature that uses the AGP bus to process texture data when the card's main RAM is full (and the Voodoo3 has only 16Mb).

But while the Voodoo3 cards are not very future-proof due to their lack of features, they still pack a punch when it comes to actual performance. In real world tests (ie games), there was a mixed reception to each card.

The 2000 PCI proved itself as a quality card and, at a price point of under £100, is certainly recommended to those of you lacking an AGP slot. It performed well as a low-end card,



The 3dfx Voodoo3 packs a punch when it comes to performance.

revealed that the Voodoo3 had very much the same core as its predecessor, a lot of people were disappointed. The fact of the matter is, Voodoo3 as a chipset represents little more than a much faster version of Voodoo2 – it's around two to four times as powerful as a Voodoo2 SLI solution, depending on the model. The performance increases come



GLOSSARY

Some of the terminology applied to 3D cards, and what it all means

PCI The standard bus on most existing PCs. Fast enough for most games, but can't cope with high-end 3D graphics.

AGP Accelerated Graphics Port. A new PC bus specifically designed for fast 3D graphics, which only comes with today's newer PCs. Data on AGP 3D cards can be stored in system memory rather than on the card itself, which means they're very fast.

ANTI-ALIASING Smooths the image by 'guessing' the properties of pixels between pixels. Gets rid of that 'patchwork quilt' effect on surfaces viewed close-up.

API Application Programming Interface. A specific set of instructions sent by a 3D game to a 3D card's drivers (eg OpenGL).

B/T/TRI-LINEAR FILTERING Blurs a texture as it is applied to a 3D object to give it a more realistic and non-pixelated look.

BUMP-MAPPING Creates a three-dimensional surface by raising and lowering the heights of selected colours in the image.

DIRECT3D Microsoft's own multi-platform API. Part of the DirectX suite of developing tools.

FPS Frames per second. The number of frames of animation the card is rendering per second.

GLIDE 3dfx's own API. If you want to play a game written in Glide, you need a 3dfx card. All 3dfx-only games are written in Glide.

MIP-MAPPING Enables multiple textures to be used for the same surface. When you're very close to an object a detailed texture appears, only to be replaced by a smaller one as you get further away.

MULTI-TEXTURING Combining different textures to create a realistic surface – an image of the player could be combined with a metal texture to give a reflective effect.

OPENGL A multi-platform API. Developers of non-3dfx specific games use this a lot.

SLI When two Voodoo cards are linked together in one machine they're in SLI mode, giving you twice the power of a single card.

TEXT ENGINE A chip specifically for rendering textures. Two of these mean effects such as bump mapping can be rendered twice as fast.

TEXTURE A flat surface applied to a 3D object to give it a realistic look.

Z-BUFFER Works out how 'deep' into the image objects should be. For instance, it should stop parts of characters (arms, etc) showing through walls.

and could certainly spruce up any low-end system.

The 3000 AGP gave excellent results under OpenGL, and is altogether a very capable card. However, the TNT2 and G400 cards are generally faster under Direct3D, if not at 640x480 or 800x600, then at higher resolutions, such as 1024x768 and above.

We couldn't recommend the 3500 TV AGP over the 3000, purely due to its added performance, because the added 17MHz make quite a minimal difference (although it does make it the OpenGL king). Therefore, the £200 price tag means we can only praise it for its multimedia features. The TV tuner is indeed of high quality and, while the video capture is certainly far from spectacular, it allows for a 'Digital VCR' facility, where you can record TV straight to your hard disk as a movie file.

NVIDIA AND THE TNT2 CHIPSET

NVIDIA's (www.nvidia.com) original Riva TNT chipset proved itself excellent for all-round 3D quality and speed at the time, and the TNT2 cards were certainly expected to be just as useful for the intensive games of today.

Diamond Viper v770
features the TNT2 chipset.

In case you didn't already know, NVIDIA sell their chipsets to companies like Guillemot and Creative Labs, so there are many variations of TNT2 available. Most manufacturers have released cards based on the standard, or 'vanilla' TNT2, as well as the faster Ultra variants.

As recommended by NVIDIA, the clock speeds for TNT2 cards should

be 125/143MHz for the 'vanillas', and 150/175MHz for the Ultras. "Not a chance," said everybody else. In fact, now that the TNT2 chipset has been around for a while, manufacturers have been achieving clock speeds of well above that.

You should be able to find cards with speeds up to, and in excess of, 143/150MHz and 175/183MHz respectively, with the faster cards

The TNT2 chipset has all the high-end features you need to stay ahead of the game, such as 32-bit colour and AGP texturing up to 900Mb/sec

attracting slightly higher prices. However, there are other factors to consider. Some cards have a TV-out for big screen gaming, some don't. Most TNT2s should have AGP4x support, but there are some that have ignored this feature. The games that are bundled with the cards also vary; one may have titles already in your collection, others may not have any at all.

Standard TNT2s come with either 16 or 32Mb of RAM, but Ultras are fixed at 32Mb. The

TNT2 chipset has all the high-end features you need to stay ahead of the game, such as 32-bit colour, and AGP texturing (up to 900Mb/sec). It can also handle texture sizes of up to 2048x2048. However, it doesn't provide any features that make it stand out from the pack – which is all too apparent when you look at what the G400 series has to offer.

How much does having 32-bit colour affect your visuals? Well, all the latest games should have 32-bit colour as well as 16-bit, so there's no problem there. To notice any real difference, though, you really need a 17-inch monitor or bigger with a bright and colourful game running – and, even then, it'll be the last thing you worry about when your ass is being fragged all over the place in *Unreal Tournament*.

Be aware that increasing the colour depth from 16 to 32-bit will result in a performance hit. To be fair though, a decent PC will make it quite unnoticeable, and obviously it's always nice to have the option.

In Direct3D, the 'vanilla' cards are very pleasing, and the same applies to OpenGL. However, they can come under strain more quickly than you would expect when running intensive games such as *Midtown Madness* and

Kingpin. But while they can be put under pressure as a result of their lower clock speeds, they are absolutely fine for most games.

The Ultras are a different story, as the significantly higher clock speeds bring them up to the same level as the best of the competition. They have excellent speed in Direct3D, matching the Voodoo3s and going slightly better when increasing resolutions. In fact, only the G400 MAX beats it for overall Direct3D performance. In terms of OpenGL, the Ultras are also extremely competent.

MATROX AND THE G400 CHIPSET

Matrox (www.matrox.com) have always been known for their 2D prowess, ever since the early days of the original Millennium. Having mainly concentrated on making top-

class 2D cards, they attempted to corner the gaming population with their Mystique G200 card, which lost out to the Voodoo2 and TNT where 3D performance was concerned.

The Matrox G400 MAX is a 32Mb card.

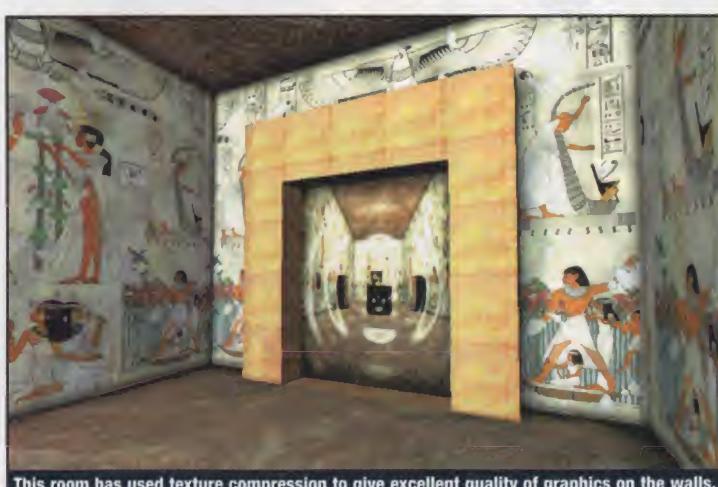
This time they have learnt by their mistakes, and are right back in the picture with their Millennium G400 series. The first option is the standard G400, which is available in 16 and 32Mb form. Apart from that, they're essentially the same card: they're both are clocked at roughly 125/150MHz and have a 300MHz RAMDAC.

The top of the range G400 MAX is a 32Mb card only, but benefits from faster clock speeds of around 166/200MHz, resulting in an overall speed increase of roughly 30 percent. It also has a faster 360MHz RAMDAC.

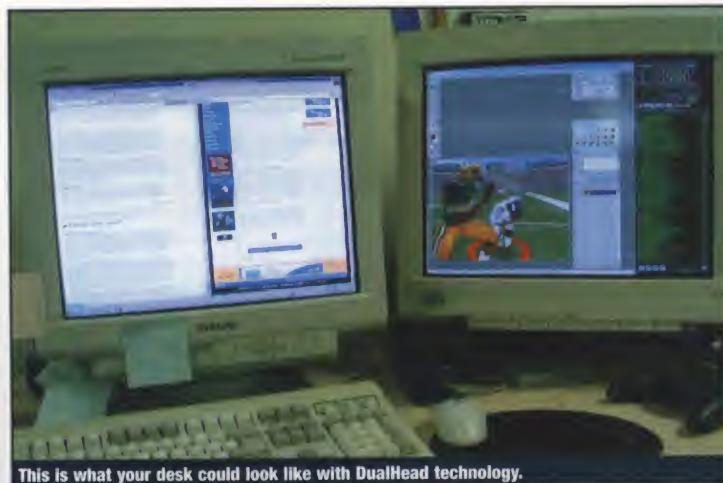
Image quality was one of the G200's strong points, and Matrox have blessed the G400 series with the same good fortune – they're absolutely the best as far as this is concerned. The colours palette is equally distinguished: the VQC2 (Vibrant Colour Quality) provides 32-bit precision along the 3D pipeline, 32-bit rendering, 32-bit buffers, 32-bit everything – providing excellent, vivid colours.

The G400 series has Environment Mapped Bump Mapping in hardware. When a game supports it through DirectX 6, it gives a very nice effect, making the surfaces of polygons react realistically to light changes.

A G400 card is the perfect excuse to buy that 19-inch monitor you've



This room has used texture compression to give excellent quality of graphics on the walls.



This is what your desk could look like with DualHead technology.

always wanted. And your old one will not be redundant: the G400s all have two display outputs (the DualHead feature) allowing you to stretch your desktop over two monitors, LCD screens or TVs, and multitask like never before. You can even play selected games with two different views at once. But Windows 98 is required for maximum functionality.

Full AGP2x/4x support, with Multi-threaded bus mastering maximises the available bandwidth. A 256-bit DualBus architecture also helps data circulate around that little bit faster than the rest, and this contributes to the unbeatable 2D performance.

The G400 16Mb isn't necessarily aimed at gamers, and is only really recommended if you want it for the 2D speed, image quality, colours, and so on. If you primarily need the DualHead feature, you probably don't need to spend more on the better models.

If you need a G400 card for its 3D performance as well, you should go for a 32Mb version. The G400 32Mb is very comfortable when dealing with Direct3D games, and the lower clock speeds do not show in the performance. Most high-end users and gamers should be looking at the G400 MAX, though.

Its higher clock speeds make it a card to be reckoned with, beating everything else hands-down in Direct3D, and this becomes even more apparent when you increase the resolution and colour depth. There are questions regarding OpenGL performance on the G400s. It's all well and good having the best Direct3D scores, but what about all those first-person shooter fans out there? Thankfully, Matrox have kept their word and are still dedicated to bringing out even faster ICD drivers, so it's not a problem any more.

S3 AND THE SAVAGE4 CHIPSET

After the total anti-climax of the Savage3D chipset, we were expecting a marked improvement in S3's latest

submission to the video card arena. Y'see, the only thing Savage3D had going for it was that it featured S3TC, or S3's texture compression – meaning where games supported it, textures would be noticeably more detailed and still run at a usual speed.

Now S3, who have since merged with Diamond Multimedia (hence the website: www.diamondmm.com), are right back on track with a chipset that can hold its own in the budget arena. The Savage4 chipset improves on the Savage3D considerably; the whole chipset is much more stable as a result of the improved drivers, and comes in two main forms.

The standard Savage4 has a few slight variations, but the best and most common is the 'Pro+', which is typically clocked at 125/143MHz with a 300MHz RAMDAC.

The Savage4 Xtreme tries to break away from the budget arena (but

doesn't really succeed), while still occupying the same price level. It's only a bit more expensive than the standard Savage4, and is clocked at 166/166MHz, while the RAMDAC still runs at 300MHz.

Due to S3 and Diamond's

niceties you would expect from a top-end chipset. In fact, apart from 32-bit colour output and the like, texture compression is also present – a feature you would certainly not expect to find in such an inexpensive solution.

Texture compression is finally coming into mainstream acceptance, and it prolongs the life of this particular chipset. When developing a game with TC in mind, highly detailed textures on objects, walls, and environments can be drawn that would normally have been too large and slow for the system to cope with. These big textures are shrunk down to the size of normal ones, with the help of TC, thus allowing for much more realism at the usual speed.

The Savage4 seems like a reasonably good choice on face value. S3 have obviously intended the Savage 4 chipset as a budget buy, and it certainly performs like one. It took off in our 3D tests, but never achieved any kind of altitude, with fairly average scores. While the Savage4 is



Diamond Stealth III Xtreme card.

merger, the only Xtreme card you can buy at the time of writing is the Diamond Stealth III S540 Xtreme.

For a budget card, the feature set on the Savage4 is quite comprehensive. Both variations are usually available as 32Mb cards, and have all the

TECH SPECS

These specs are based on the cards we tested. The information is correct at the time of testing, though there may be some discrepancies.

For instance, Matrox does not disclose the clock speeds of their cards, so calculated estimates were used (by analysing the other specifications). The clock speeds on TNT2 and Savage4 cards are averages, since the manufacturers are left largely to their own devices where this is concerned.

The RAM sizes are, again, liable to variation. There may be some OEM cards that have less than the minimum stated for that particular chipset, but for retail packs you should find the specs are correct. None of these cards can have more than 32Mb, though.

CHIPSET	RAM	CORE/RAM SPEED	RAMDAC	AGP 4X	32-BIT COLOUR	OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES
Voodoo3 2000 PCI	16Mb	143/143MHz	300MHz	N/A	No	Glide support
Voodoo3 3000 AGP	16Mb	166/166MHz	350MHz	No	No	Glide support, TV-out
Voodoo3 3500 TV AGP	16Mb	183/183MHz	350MHz	No	No	Glide support, TV tuner, video capture
Riva TNT2	16 or 32Mb	143/166MHz	300MHz	Varies	Yes	TV-out on some models
Riva TNT2 Ultra	32Mb	175/183MHz	300MHz	Varies	Yes	TV-out on some models
Millennium G400	16 or 32Mb	125/150MHz	300MHz	Yes	Yes	256-bit Bus, DualHead, bump mapping
Millennium G400 MAX	32Mb	166/200MHz	360MHz	Yes	Yes	256-bit Bus, DualHead, bump mapping
Savage4 Pro+	16 or 32Mb	125/143MHz	300MHz	Varies	Yes	S3TC, TV-out on some models
Savage4 Xtreme	32Mb	166/160MHz	300MHz	Varies	Yes	S3TC, TV-out on some models
Neon 250	32Mb	125/125MHz	250MHz	No	Yes	None to mention

THE BOTTOM LINE

CARDS BY CHIPSET

UPPERS

DOWNERS

COMMENT

CARDS BASED ON THE VOODOO3 CHIPSET FROM 3DFX

3dfx Voodoo3 2000 PCI 16Mb • £99

www.3dfx.com

3dfx Voodoo3 3000 AGP 16Mb • £149

www.3dfx.com

3dfx Voodoo3 3500 TV AGP 16Mb • £199

www.3dfx.com

- Superior OpenGL performance
- Good Direct3D speed
- Excellent 2D speed and image quality
- Glide support ensuring almost total games compatibility
- A bundle of multimedia treats included on the 3500 TV

- Only 16Mb RAM
- If you play games on a high-spec PC, this will have limited appeal

While the 2000 is too limited in features to challenge the Savage4 Xtreme in the budget stakes, it's still a good buy if you don't have an AGP slot, or play old Glide games. The 3000 can hold its own, though – especially with OpenGL games, but also in Direct3D. The 3500, meanwhile, has multimedia treats left, right and centre, and it is worth the extra cash for these rather than for the increased speed.

CARDS BASED ON THE RIVA TNT2 CHIPSET FROM NVIDIA

(Prices range from around £120-130 for a TNT2 'vanilla' card, to £150-170 for an Ultra model)

Creative 3D Blaster Riva TNT2 + Riva TNT2 Ultra

www.creative.com

Diamond Viper v770 + v770 Ultra

www.diamondmm.com

Elsa Erazor III + Erazor III Pro

www.elsa.com

Guillemot Maxi Gamer Xentor + Xentor 32

www.guillemot.com

- The best all-round performance chipset
- No slouch in terms of 2D speed and image quality
- All the quality features you would expect

- Many cards to choose from, so hunt around
- No amazing features that make it stand out from the pack

TNT2 is the best third-generation chipset for all-round speed. While the 'vanillas' are not so good for hardcore gamers, the Ultras handle Direct3D and OpenGL titles with ease, and they will still be looking good in six months. If you are TNT2-hunting, the internet is a great way to find out some general information. And always hunt around for the best price, whether it is in your local games emporium, or through a mail order outlet.

CARDS BASED ON THE G400 CHIPSET FROM MATROX

Matrox G400 16Mb • £125

www.matrox.com

Matrox G400 32Mb • £155

www.matrox.com

Matrox G400 MAX 32Mb • £185

www.matrox.com

- Immensely capable, especially with Direct3D apps
- Supreme image quality, colours, and 2D speed
- There's simply nothing better for high-end users
- Packed with lovely features

- Needs a hefty PC to get anything near top performance
- OpenGL isn't perfect, but Matrox are still improving drivers
- Expensive, and it's a total bastard to get hold of the MAX

Matrox have really pushed the boat out here. They just didn't know when to stop – and it's paid off. The G400s are as future proof as PC hardware gets. The MAX doesn't know the meaning of the word pressure: you can pile on the resolution and colours. The standard 16/32Mb cards are also impressive, and still have all the same functions. And the outstanding features completely justify the asking prices.

CARDS BASED ON THE SAVAGE4 CHIPSET FROM S3

(Prices range from around £70-90 for a standard Savage4, to £100-120 for an Xtreme model)

Creative 3D Blaster Savage4

www.creative.com

Diamond Stealth SIII s540 + SIII s540 Xtreme

www.diamondmm.com

Elsa Winner II

www.elsa.com

- Decent performance for all but the most demanding gamers
- Complete feature set, and texture compression is a bonus
- A lot cheaper than most other 32Mb AGP offerings

- Doesn't really cut it when compared to the big boys
- If you play all the very latest games, this will not cut the mustard

S3 have learnt from previous experience and have produced a very worthy budget chipset. While not entirely adept at coping with intensive games, the Savage4 is a good enough all-rounder for those of you that want a fast, complete card for casual gaming. The Xtreme is noticeably faster for a slightly higher price, so if you have the extra cash, the Xtreme is the budget card of choice.

CARD BASED ON THE NEON CHIPSET FROM VIDEOLOGIC

VideoLogic Neon 250 • £125

www.videologic.com

- 32Mb of RAM... and 32-bit colour

- Severely lacking in speed and features
- The specs make it look like an 18 month-old chipset
- Expensive for what it is

When VideoLogic committed their efforts to the Dreamcast, it was hard to tell how this would affect their stance in the PC market. Judging by the state of the Neon 250 (which is horribly delayed, as you can see by the specs), VideoLogic have clearly suffered. Can they bounce back? Only time will tell.



More rippling water, courtesy of Matrox's own technology demo.



With S3TC this kind of detail can be common throughout the game environment.



Dungeon Keeper 2, with the G400's bump mapping effect on the lava...



...and there's more on the surface of the truck in Carmageddon: The Death Race 2000.

fine for gamers on a budget, the Xtreme offers better performance if you can afford to spend a little extra. It is often noticeably faster, and is probably the best mix of price and performance in the market today.

VIDEOLOGIC AND THE NEON CHIPSET

VideoLogic have never had a major stance in the video card market, even though they were one of the first players in 3D acceleration. Despite boasting considerable developer support, their first PowerVR card never got off the ground. Their PowerVR PCX2 was a half-hearted attempt to rectify the situation; 3dfx's groundbreaking Voodoo was already making waves in the PC community and killed it off fairly quickly.

The Neon cards are based on the PowerVR 2 chipset, which has been delayed for a long, long, time. The first card we have managed to get hold of is the Neon 250, and it is clocked at 125/125MHz with a 250MHz RAMDAC. It is a 32Mb, AGP2x only card.

PowerVR 2 sounded so good when it was announced – and if it had been released at the time, it



VideoLogic PowerVR 2 has 32-bit colour.

would have beaten everything else. As you've probably already noticed, the specs on the Neon 250 are anything but exciting, compared to what is on offer these days.

It does have 32-bit colour, but the original Riva TNT also had this – and it also had a 250MHz RAMDAC and AGP2x. While the Neon 250 has slightly higher clock speeds (TNT had around 110MHz on average), you just can't help thinking that it is simply an old prototype of a card that has been released way too late, with VideoLogic bundling 32Mb on it at the last moment in a vain attempt to get in on the act.

This is only made worse by the fact that the Neon 250 sells for over £120 – and you can buy a Savage4 for less. As you would expect, the Neon 250 just cannot hack the latest games, and is really not a very good card for the money.

THE JURY DECIDES...

You should by now already have a pretty good idea of which chipset should be occupying your beloved (or not!) PC – but before you head on down to the high street, cash in

LOOKING AHEAD

We've seen what's available at the moment, but what about the future?

If you have been reading the 'TechHead' page (see news section, p38) in recent months, you'll be aware of the latest developments concerning video card technology.

There's 3dfx with their 'Napalm' chipset, which looks to be quite significantly delayed. It was originally slated for a Christmas release, we then heard it had slipped to March 2000. It seems likely that either there are some internal problems, or 3dfx are struggling to contend with the impressive announcements that have been made by their competitors.

Though 3dfx are maintaining there is no connection, their CEO Greg Ballard has resigned from the company. Either way, it is highly unlikely we will be seeing Napalm cards in the UK at least until the second quarter of next year.

NVIDIA should have their GeForce 256 cards out before Christmas, albeit at prices of around £200 (for a 32Mb card!). But we reckon that buying one this early would be a rash course of action, for several reasons. Firstly, due to the fact that GeForce 256 has

the potential to house up to 128Mb of RAM, so waiting for at least a 64Mb version would be a much better idea.

Secondly, the first cards will use SDRAM, which has been the norm for the past year. Eventually, there will be variants that use DDR (Double-Data Rate) RAM – which is significantly faster.

Thirdly, the GeForce 256 chips are currently being manufactured in 0.22 micron, but will switch to 0.18 when it becomes possible. As a result, companies will step up core and RAM speeds, resulting in better performance.

S3's Savage2000 chipset looks to be the best all-round next generation solution, and this, again, should be available for the festive season. But as with the GeForce 256 cards, waiting for faster versions with more RAM would be a good idea. And let's not forget that with this level of competition, prices will go down faster than Gino under a light tackle.

There is always something new on the way in 3D land. But rest assured, there will be complete and up-to-the-minute coverage of all the latest hardware in PC Zone. And as soon as we can get our hands on all the next-generation video cards, we'll be telling you exactly what you need to know.

hand, take in a few last minute particulars.

If you have a small monitor, say 14- or 15-inch, you will probably not be able to run games at above 1024x768. Therefore, buying a card based on a G400 will be quite pointless, since it only truly excels in higher resolutions.

You'll also find that many of the features found on high-end chipsets are wasted on a small screen. A tired little monitor just cannot do 32-bit colour justice, nor can it even attempt to reproduce the majestic image quality that such chipsets produce.

A 17-inch monitor or bigger will suffice, however. Most serious gamers will probably be OK in this department. If this is the case, and you have a 350MHz processor or better, you'd be well advised to go for either a G400 MAX or a good

If you need a G400 card for its 3D performance as well, you should go for a 32Mb version. It's very comfortable when dealing with Direct3D

TNT2 Ultra, depending on which suits your needs most.

If your system does not quite match that spec, you might feel that it is still OK to accommodate one of these cards (of course, they will still be fast) until you upgrade, and are then able to reap more out of the performance.

On the other hand, you may not want to shell out more than £150 for a graphics card. The

Voodoo3 3000 AGP is a good card for those of you with small monitors, especially as it is within that price range, and is also very fast at lower resolutions. A Savage4 Xtreme card also becomes a viable proposition; as they are cheaper still, suit slower PCs and offer texture compression. There is also the 'vanilla' TNT2s, but we don't recommend it unless you absolutely crave the quality of NVIDIA's chipsets, the Xtreme has

the edge in performance and deserves your money.

For the absolute bargain hunters among us, a standard Savage4 AGP card should sell for around £80, and it tends to work well with less fortunate systems. While slightly more expensive, the Voodoo3 2000 PCI is just the ticket for older games and even older systems – which do not have AGP slots. PCZ

TEST WINNERS



PCZONE BEST ALL-ROUNDER
Diamond Viper v770

This card is based on the TNT2 chipset, and as such is the perfect choice for those looking for sensible pricing and superb performance.

BEST ALL-ROUNDER

Diamond Viper v770

This card is based on the TNT2 chipset, and as such is the perfect choice for those looking for sensible pricing and superb performance.

BEST PERFORMER

Matrox G400 MAX

BEST PERFORMER
Matrox G400 MAX

Incredible image quality, super-fast 3D and tons of 'multimedia' extras make this the best card on test here. This is the new benchmark for 3D cards. Voodoo who?

PCZONE BEST PERFORMER
Matrox G400 MAX



This card is based on the TNT2 chipset, and as such is the perfect choice for those looking for sensible pricing and superb performance.

This card is based on the TNT2 chipset, and as such is the perfect choice for those looking for sensible pricing and superb performance.

This card is based on the TNT2 chipset, and as such is the perfect choice for those looking for sensible pricing and superb performance.



PCZONE BEST BUDGET BUY
Diamond Stealth III

The III supports texture compression, 32-bit colour and a host of other features you would not expect from a low-end card. Bargain.

BEST BUDGET BUY

Diamond Stealth III

The III supports texture compression, 32-bit colour and a host of other features you would not expect from a low-end card. Bargain.

WIN

A HIGH PERFORMANCE 3D CARD



Here's your chance to win a next generation 3D card and a copy of *TrickStyle*, Criterion's nifty arcade boarding game. The Diamond S540 Xtreme card will power even the most demanding of games at a blistering frame-rate, and its built-in support for texture compression is designed to bring an unprecedented level of detail to the games taking advantage of this feature. So then, you'll be wanting to win one. We have 20 Diamond Xtreme cards to give away, and each one comes with a copy of *TrickStyle*. All you have to do is answer the three questions below, send your entry off to the address at the bottom of the page and hey presto, you're in with a chance to win...



TrickStyle: looks fab, and the gameplay's no slouch either.

Q: The Diamond Xtreme uses an innovative feature called...

- a) Texture suppression b) Texture compression
- c) Dexterous expression

Q: 3D is...

- a) Two-dimensional b) Three-dimensional
- c) Multi-dimensional

Q: TrickStyle is...

- a) Fooling someone into wearing something very silly
- b) A virtual reality computer game
- c) Something to do with Dreamcast

Just answer the questions and send them on a postcard, along with all the information requested, to the address below

• Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / E-mail / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18

• Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

• Are you a current subscriber to PC ZONE?

Send your entry to: 3D Card Competition CPCZ913A, PC ZONE, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. (Closing date: 16 December 1999)

• Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. And all that. Phew!



TRICKSTYLE



• S3 texture compression quite clearly showing off with amazingly detailed Egyptian backdrops.



• Unreal with S3 texture compression. Check out the incredible detail lavished on the environment.



• S3 texture compression quite clearly showing off with amazingly detailed Egyptian backdrops.

PC ZONE

THE KINGDOM, THE



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Having a bad day? Feel like you are being cut down in your prime? We can't help you with personality disorders, but we can help you to master that game that's been out to get you for the last month. So read on for a host of cheats and tips to make your day pass that little bit easier...

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

132 CHEATMASTER

If at first you don't succeed... cheat. Allow Keith Pullin to show you how it's done.

133 DEAR KEITH

Are you stuck in rut? Run ragged by rogue robots? Then look no further than agony uncle Keith.

134 HOW TO...

You've upgraded (again) and your old PC now sits in the corner sulking. Why not set up your own network and enjoy multiplayer gaming at home?

142 C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

Armies in disarray? Supply lines leaving you drier than a turbot in a tumble dryer? Prepare to be moist again using our wet-look guide.

148 SYSTEM SHOCK 2

Last month we gave you Part One of our guide to one the scariest games to grace a PC in some time. The screaming hasn't stopped yet. Here's Part Two.

154 DEAR WANDY

Wazza is dead! Long live Wandy – our new resident technical wizard at Troubleshooter HQ.

156 WATCHDOG

Have you recently discovered that the customer is only right when not buying hi-tech gadgetry? Adam Philips wears his underwear on the outside as he champions your rights and sorts out service that you feel is pants.

YOUR HOSTS



Phil
Wand



Keith
Pullin



Adam
Phillips



Paul
Mallinson

CHEAT MASTER

Here it is, the last bastion of the lost and losing. Cheer up, read on and confront your fears refreshed and tooled up to the max...

★ CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin

ON THE CD



More cheats, tips and solutions than ever on the cover **ON THE CD** CD this month. Find out what's in store for you by looking at the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser.

NEED HELP?

If your problems persist, you can solve them if you ...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, **PC ZONE**, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Dear Keith' or 'CheatMaster' in the subject line.

AGE OF EMPIRES II: AGE OF KINGS

Microsoft

This game can be difficult, but hey! Press Enter during the fray to bring up the chat box, then type in any of these cheats:

i r winner Win scenario
rock on 1,000 stone
lumberjack 1,000 wood
robin hood 1,000 gold
cheese steak jimmy's 1,000 food
torpedo# Kill opponent #
to smitherens Gives a saboteur
black death Destroy all enemies
marco Reveal map
aegis Quick build
polo Remove shadows
natural wonders Control nature
wimpywimpywimpy Commit suicide
i love the monkey head Gives vdml
how do you turn this on Gives a Cobra car
resign You lose

HOMEWORLD

Sierra

Stuck? Just fire up the game with one of these command line switches, for example 'C:\homeworld\homeworld.exe /debug'.

/debug Debug mode
/notactics Disable tactics
/noretreat Disable retreat feature in tactics
/disableAVI Disable in-game movies
/noBG Disable galaxy backgrounds
/noCompPlayer Disable default computer players

others, you should find the 'debug.msc' and the 'release.msc' files. Rename 'release.msc' to 'release.bak', and then 'debug.msc' to 'release.msc'. The cheat menu should then appear when you start the game.

DRAKAN: ORDER OF THE FLAME

Psynopsis

For unlimited potions bring up the inventory screen, drag a potion out of the inventory box – but don't drop it! Resume the action, go back to the inventory and you'll find another potion. Repeat the process for another potion, then as many times as you like. This also works for fire, ice and lightning crystals.

STAR WARS: EPISODE 1 – RACER

LucasArts

In the shop press Ctrl, F4 and '4' one after the other to receive 3,000 extra credits.

OUTCAST

Infogrames

For more money, health and a shedload of other stuff try this file-changing cheat.

Locate the 'outcast.ini' file in the 'oc' folder of the main *Outcast* directory, open it with a text editor and adjust the following attributes:

MoneyChest = 5000000
Money = 1000000.0
Life = 5000000.0
Weight_of_bullet = 0.01000
Speed_of_bullet_min = 90.000000
Speed_of_bullet_max = 110.000000
Reloadtime_of_bullet = 20000

RecoilElasticity = 4.000000
Recoil = 15.000000
MaximumRecoil = 15.000000
Load_critical_level = 3
Lifetime_of_bullet = 20000
Friction_of_bullet = 0.000000

RAINBOW SIX: ROGUE SPEAR

Take 2 Interactive

Hit Enter to bring up the console and type these codes:

teamgod Team god mode
avatargod Avatar god mode
5fingerdiscount Full inventory
heshadowknows Invisible mode
teamshadow Entire team becomes invisible
stumpy Team becomes stumpy dwarves
bignoggin Team grows big heads
meganoggin Team grows enormous heads
nobrainer Brain usage
explore No victory conditions
clobberer Clobberer mode
1-900 Heavy breathing
turnpunchkick Side-scrolling mode
silentbutdeadly Fart mode
monocle Monocle mode
Alternatively, use the following codes for different map modes:
normalcolors, panickedscolors,
roestatescolors, roespeedcolors,
combatstatecolors,
behaviorcolors, psychstatecolors,
threatawarenesscolors,
alertnessstatecolors,
alertnessstatecolors,
aiplancolors, levelmaps, testplan,
drawplan, pathpointlinks,
coverpoints, pathpoints,
objectwalls, obstaclewalls

SHADOW MAN

Acclaim

To access the cheat menu, open the 'data\scripts\menus\english' folder in the *Shadow Man* directory. Among

Damage = 310.000000
 Burst_Size_Level_3 = 24
 Burst_Size_Level_2 = 22
 Burst_Size_Level_1 = 20
 BulletRadius = 10.000000
 AmmoBox = 30.000000

NB: Feel free to experiment with these values, but prepare yourself for some strange effects. It's also worth saving the original file somewhere safe - just in case.

You can also edit the 'WeaponMerchant' part of the file to get cheap items. Likewise, when you find the 'Bonuses' section, change all values to 999. There are plenty of other tweaks to be made too, so just look carefully down the list of attributes and simply adjust the values to whatever you desire. Easy.

GTA 2 (DEMO)

Take 2 Interactive
 A file called 'NYC.GCI' in the

'Data' folder of the game's main directory holds all the car attributes. If you open it with a text editor you can have a fiddle around under the bonnet and radically alter the handling of the car.

Cop Car	Car name (change to whatever you want)
12	Model number
1	Turbo on/off (1/0)
60	Destroy value
114.500	Weight of car
1.000	Front drive bias
0.500	Front mass bias
2.000	Brake friction
0.433	Turn in
0.400	Turn ratio
1.250	Rear end stability
0.400	Handbrake slide value
0.150	Acceleration
0.415	Max speed
1.000	Anti-strength (f0.000 for invincibility)
0.115	Skid threshold
0.550	Gear1 multiplier
0.680	Gear2 multiplier

1.000 Gear3 multiplier
 0.180 Gear2 speed
 0.290 Gear3 speed

POLICE QUEST: SWAT 2

Sierra

Cut and paste the following codes to the 'Missions Played' section of the 'swat.ini' file which you will find in the game's root directory. You can now access all missions on the quickplay option.

SM1=1	SM2=1	SM3=1
SM4=1	SM5=1	SM6=1
SM7=1	SM8=1	SM9=1
SM10=1	SM11=1	SM12=1
SM13=1	SM14=1	SM15=1
TM16=1	TM17=1	TM18=1
TM19=1	TM20=1	TM21=1
TM22=1	TM23=1	TM24=1
TM25=1	TM26=1	TM27=1
TM28=1	TM29=1	TM30=1

As an added bonus, try typing 'LOS' during the game to see all characters and items.

GULF WAR: OPERATION DESERT HAMMER 3DO Company

Hit Enter during the game, then type in these codes for some reinforcing cheats.

power me God mode with full health, weapons and strikes
 regen me God mode with full health
 call strike Call in airstrike
 done Skip level
 hud Toggle HUD on/off
 goodkeys Toggle keymap settings

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

Eidos Interactive

It couldn't be easier to manage England, could it? Just pick any team on the Team Select screen, click on any player and then click on English. You are now the proud manager of England. There's hope for Keegan yet.

CALL OUR TIPS LINE
0207 917 7698
THURS 1.30PM-5.30PM



Neil Valentine here will answer any question you have. Possibly...

Email us for a quick response:
 Tipszone@hotmail.com

DEAR KEITH

Out of ideas? Find yourself completely lost? Ask *Keith Pullin* by mail or fax - he'll tell you where to go

COMPLETELY KAINED

Q I can't defeat Durmah in *Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver* - I don't know what to do after pulling the stakes out of him. Can you help me kill him for once and for all please?

Matthew Williams, Forest Green
A We'll give it a try... Once you've extracted the stakes, lure him slowly into the furnace room. If you move too fast he flees back into his lair, so make sure you're very subtle. After you've edged him into the burning furnace, turn on the gas and hit the switch. Durmah fries and you're free to continue.

TOTALLY SCHNIBBLED

Q I'm an adventure game novice and have rightly or wrongly selected *Woodruff & The Schnibble Of Azimuth* as my introductory jaunt. I hasten to say I'm not doing particularly well. I've woken up, got a terrible headache, chatted to a few locals and I'm still none the wiser as to what's going on. I would be forever in your debt if you could just help me with these first few faltering steps.

Greg Balham, Warwick

A Getting hold of a pair of boots is the key to the first part of your quest because when you click on the river you discover you can't cross barefoot, so you need to find boots. Click on the nearby crate, then the nut, and use it on the beggar. He chuck's one boot across the river back at you. Now enter Azimuth's house and use

the boot you already have on the one stuck in the roof. It falls down and - voilà - you now have a pair of boots. Go back to The Bridge of Slums and cross the river to be on your way.

ALL DRIED UP

Q I keep running out of water in *SimCity 3000*. I've tried buying some from neighbouring towns, but I still end up dry. Can you please tell me how I can sustain a ready supply?

Daniel Fischer, Blackburn

A The best way to produce enough water is to create a single square of fresh water away from the ocean and then build up to 16 pumping stations around it. If you assemble enough of these 'water creation zones' you can produce enough to support yourself, as well as some to sell to nearby towns for a profit.

If you need more help, there's an excellent *SimCity 3000* strategy guide in Issue #76 of PC ZONE. Check it out.

CHEATS UNLEASHED

Q Are there any cheats for *Sinistar Unleashed*? I heard there are, but you haven't printed any yet so I'm confused. What's the story?

Bryan Gilbert, Bristol

A There are a couple of cheats, and they go something like this... Type 'cheatnodmg' to enter god mode, 'cheatfreecrystal' for extra crystals, and 'level x' (where x is level number 1-30) to choose a level to start on. But

don't blame me if you complete the game in ten minutes.

A PRINCELY FALL

Q My dad bought me *Prince Of Persia 3D* (I think it was for himself really, but I'm playing it anyway). I've climbed to the top of a building after killing a fat man and can't find anywhere to go. There's a drawbridge miles beneath me that I think I'm supposed to get to, but there's no way down. What do I do?

Alan Tait, email

A You throw the game away and play something else. No? Oh, okay. Just jump from the top of the building towards the drawbridge. The Prince actually flies through the air and slides down the drawbridge to safety. Simple answers for simple games.

INSANE IN THE GAME

Q I'm stuck on *Sanitarium*. I've gone through the mansion and am now trying to get into the laboratory. In my current room there is a wheel, a lever and some clasps holding a big stone. I guess I must get the clasps to release the stone, but I just can't get the right combination on the wheel and levers. I'm missing something here - please help!

Fern Lane, Burley

A Okay, but you're going to kick yourself. Turn the wheel four times, then pull the lever on the right. Repeat this a few times (making sure you turn the wheel in the same direction each time) and eventually the

stone drops from the clasps and the door to the lab opens. Easy, huh?

ANOTHER POOR OUTCAST

Q How do you find the replacement part for Zoran's bridge in *Outcast*? I've found Makee who tells me that I need to find his friend, but I don't know where he is either. I'm at a complete dead end. Just what do I do now?

Vivian Foster, email

A I'm the only person here at ZONE to give this game a chance, so I can actually help you. If you just follow the trail of clothes to the far southwest of the area you come across Makee's friend. Sadly the poor guy is dead as a brick - killed by Gamors, but thankfully the replacement part is lying next to him. Pick it up and take it back to Zoran who is waiting next to the bridge mechanism. More fun and games ensue...

QUESTION AND A HALF

Q Who is the best side to be in *Tiberian Sun*?

Liam Ealing

A Well, that's the point Liam, it's up to you to decide. Each side has advantages and disadvantages, but generally speaking everyone has their own preference. One thing's for sure though: you won't fully understand how to defeat the other side until you've played as them. Understand? ☺

HOW TO...

SET UP A HOME NETWORK

Getting PCs talking to one another isn't half as hard as you might think. We show you how you to experience multiplayer mayhem in the comfort of your own home

★ LEGO BOY Phil Wand

Everyone's talking networks these days. With pretty much every new game supporting a multiplayer mode you no doubt feel as though you're missing out if you haven't yet linked up across the Internet. But if you have two or more PCs that aren't connected in any way, you are missing out. But fear not!

GETTING STARTED

The very first thing you need to consider when putting a network together is what hardware you need to buy. We'll look at all the components you need, from network cards and cables through to hubs and connectors. Read on.

“The very first thing you need to consider when putting a network together is what hardware you need to buy”

Getting your own Windows LAN (Local Area Network) running round your home is a doddle, and we'll show you how. With prices falling fast, there's no better time to get all your hardware wired up.

THE CARD

A network card is a slice of hardware that drops into a free slot on your motherboard. A slot on its spine will accept network

cable with either RJ45 or BNC connectors (see the Glossary for more details). In essence, it's no different to an internal modem or sound card – think of it as just another bit of kit that gives your PC added functionality. Complicated, sure, but you don't need to know how it works.

There are hundreds of cards to choose from, all claiming to do the same sort of thing. Some are expensive. Some are cheap. Some look as though they escaped from a NASA research lab. So there are a few things you need to be aware of before you burgle your piggy bank and head off into town.

First, we recommend that any card you buy should be PCI compatible (often you can buy the same model of card with ISA or a PCI, so be careful). All this

means is that the card will slot into the PCI bus on your motherboard and will be Plug & Play – this takes most of the guesswork out of your installation, and means you won't have to worry about screwing around with different settings either in Windows or on the card itself.

Second, there are three 'speeds' of card available. The first, 10Mbps, is capable of transferring up to 10Mb of data down a wire every second. The second, 100Mbps, is able to transfer up to 100Mb (dependent on what type of cable you use). The last is a switchable or combo card, 10/100Mbps, able to operate at both 10Mbps and 100Mbps. With the cost of cards being so low these days, you'd be silly to opt for



10/100Mbps PCI combo card with RJ45 connector on Cat 5 cable. This is the type of card you'll need for your home LAN, and will cost around £30.



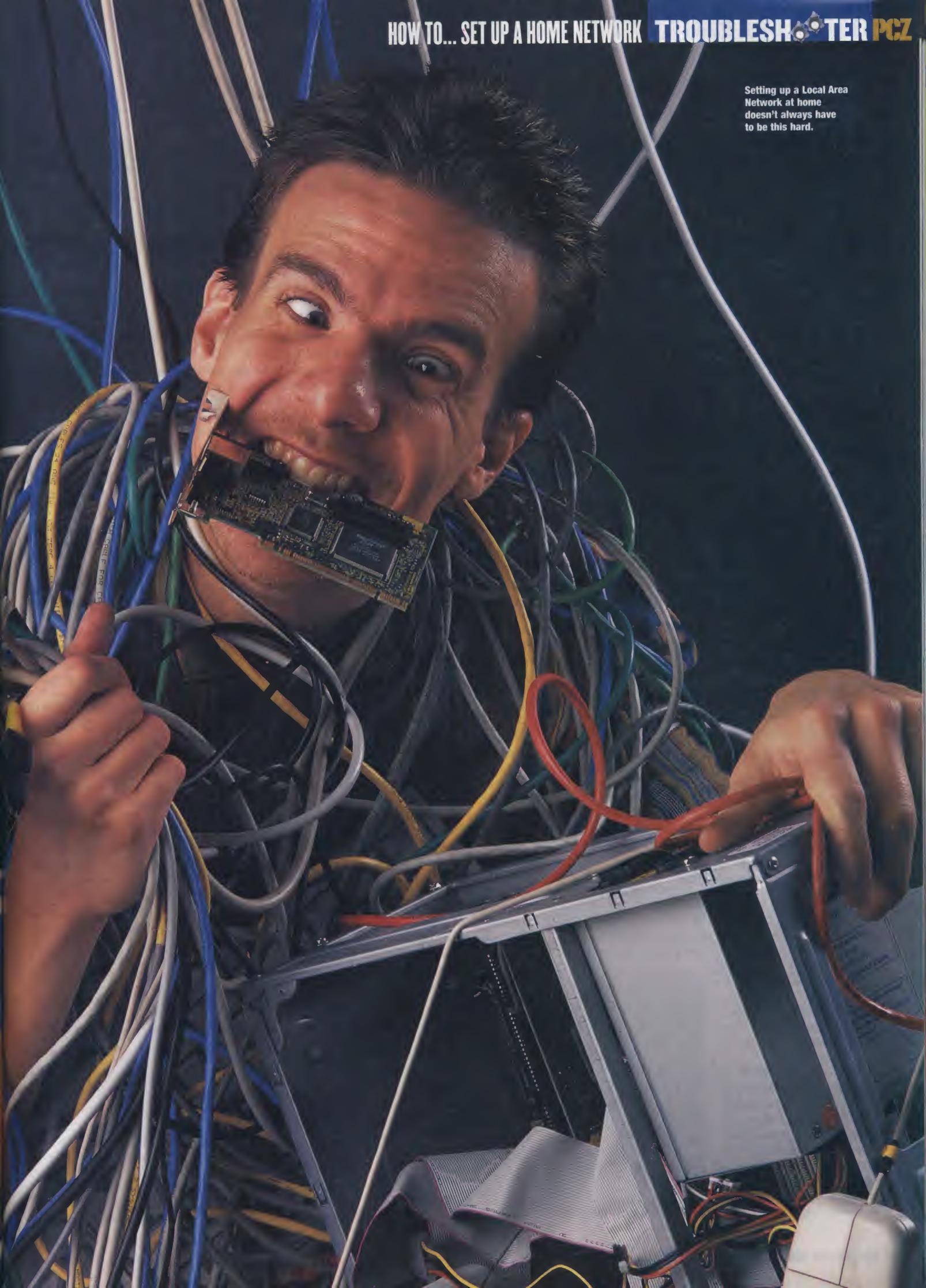
10Mbps PCI network card with RJ45 connector on Cat 5 cable. This particular card also has the capability to accept coax via a BNC connector.



This is a 10Mbps ISA network card with BNC connector on coax cable. Note the 'T-piece' and terminator.



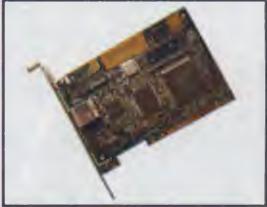
Setting up a Local Area Network at home doesn't always have to be this hard.



anything other than the 10/100Mbps – most cards available in stores are this type, but you do need to be sure.

Last of all, many cards are now being sold in large, colourful parcels as an 'all-in-one solution' for small office or home (SoHo) based networks. Do *not* be afraid of them. These big packs are often a way of saving heaps of cash and cutting down the number of different components you need to shop around for. Examples such as the £99 D-Link DFE-905 represent excellent value for money, and furnish you with some of the best network hardware out there – all in one box.

SINGLE CARDS



3COM ETHERLINK 3C905C-TX-M

PCI 10/100 combo network card

RRP £56.40 inc

Regarded in corporate circles as the industry standard, 3Com Etherlink products are on the expensive side but rarely, if ever, go wrong. Build quality and backup is unrivalled. If you're sufficiently wedged up, get yourself some 3C905s and you'll never regret it.

• www.3com.com



D-LINK DFE530TX

PCI 10/100 combo network card

RRP £24.68 inc

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED

D-Link produce reliable cards with support for all major networks: Unix NetWare, Windows NT and Windows 95 and 98. Like other cards, the DFE530TX is able to transfer data directly to/from the host's memory, freeing up valuable CPU time.

• www.dlink.co.uk

Two cards, a five port hub, plus two lengths of cable with RJ45 connectors. There are a few Trust kits on the market – make sure you get the 10/100Mbps combo cards with PCI bus connectors.

• www.trust.com

THE HUB



• An eight port hub sitting atop an ISDN router. Note that the hub is connected to the router, allowing any node on the network access to the Internet.

need to start off a small network. Includes an LED panel and uplink port to connect it to other hubs. Compact and affordable, Netgear is also a good name – even if we can't find their website.



3COM OFFICECONNECT HUB TP400-4

4 port 100 Mbps hub

RRP £69

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED

Another good hub from another good name. The OfficeConnect range features the latest 10/100 Mbps autosensing technology, allowing users to switch between speeds when needed.

• www.3com.com

MULTIPACKS & ALL-IN-ONE SOLUTIONS

KINGSTON KNE120TX SIX PACK

6x PCI 10/100 combo network cards

RRP £128.08 inc

Saves you around £40 on buying the six cards individually. If you're building a four or five node network, consider this. Not only will it fully populate your LAN, you'll have 'spares' left over for when your cheapskate mates come round.

• www.kingston.com

TRUST NETWORK KIT FOR 2 PCS

2x PCI 10/100 combo network cards

1x5 port network hub

2x5 metre UTP network cables

RRP £69.99

Includes everything you need to get started on a two node LAN.



Left to right: standard telephone wire and connector, RJ45 connector on category 5 cable, BNC connector on thin coax, RJ45 connector on category 3 cable.

THE CABLE

Cable can be a baffling subject. There are so many different terms for what is essentially one item: a length of wire that transmits network data packets from one place to another. Thin coax, thick coax, category 3, category 5, UTP, twisted pair... forget it! All you need to know for your home network is that you need category 5 cable with an RJ45 connector on each end. This will allow you to connect via a hub and rock along at up to 100Mbps.

Category 5 cable can be purchased either by the roll or in short lengths, and will cover a distance of up to 328 feet. When buying, make sure you get top quality wire with the word 'Certified' or 'Verified' stamped along its length. And when routing the cable, keep it well away from sources of electromagnetic interference, such as heater fans, neon strips, radios and the like.

Think about it. How would you connect a third PC onto your two PC LAN? You'd need some sort of complicated 'splice' in the middle – and that's where the hub comes in. It acts as a simple meeting point for cables. Instead of connecting PC to PC, you connect PC to hub. New machines are added by plugging them into a free slot – any machine so joined will be able to 'see' all the other nodes.

Hubs have a number of ports, corresponding to the maximum amount of machines on your network – a four port hub will allow you to connect up to four nodes to it, and so on. Like network cards, they come with different speed ratings: 10Mbps, 100Mbps and 10/100Mbps auto sensing. And, as with network cards, you should concentrate your finances on a 100Mbps network.

An added advantage of using a hub is that, should you suffer hardware failure in one of the machines, the network will stay up and running. Using traditional coax, if the card in one machine fails, it effectively becomes a road block through which other traffic cannot pass. The front panel on the hub will also have LEDs showing you whether particular channels are alive or dead.



NETGEAR FE104

4 port 100Mbps hub

RRP £49.99

Excellent value for money, and with all the bells and whistles you

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

Thinking long term, it's always best to stick to one manufacturer and one particular type of card, as it makes troubleshooting a lot easier. Those of you who already own more than one PC will understand the benefits of using one brand of hardware exclusively (eg. only Intel processors, only 3dfx video cards, or only Fujitsu hard disks).

Look at it logically: if anything ever *does* go wrong, you can always swap bits between machines and see whether it's failed hardware or a simple configuration problem. Plus, of course, you'll only ever need one set of driver files, and adding new stuff will be a breeze because you'll have gone

through the installation process at least once before.

INSTALLATION: THE HARDWARE

First, unplug all connections to the rear of your PC, but leave the power cable plugged in and off at the socket – this provides a route to earth (ie. a ground) for the metal chassis. Now remove the case

“It's best to stick to one manufacturer and one particular type of card”

and locate a free PCI slot on the motherboard. Usually, these are coloured white. Install the card by inserting it into the free slot and applying steady pressure. Screw the clasp to the back plane.

Unpack the hub and install it in a central position – in other words, equal distance between all your machines. Run each of the cables between the machines and the hub; push each RJ45 connector into the ports on the network cards and on the hub until you hear a 'click'. Do not go pushing cables into the port marked 'Uplink' (if you have one), as this is used solely to hook up another hub. Now power up one or more of the machines.

INSTALLATION: WINDOWS

Once your new network card is safely screwed down inside your PC, turn the machine on and wait patiently. You won't notice anything has changed until the

Windows desktop appears and the system recognises the card as a new device (Plug & Play hardware announces its intentions without you having to lift a finger). Although everything is pretty much automated, you will nonetheless be prompted for your original Windows 95/98 disk, in order to copy across any driver files that the card needs to function, so have the relevant CD-ROM handy. It's quite probable

that the system will need to reboot in order to effect the changes and to activate the drivers, so be prepared to sit on your hands a little longer. After that, well, it's down to some serious configuration issues.

1. NETWORK PROPERTIES



Network options are never too far away.

Windows up and running? Good. We now need to get it talking to your card. Forget delving around in the Windows Control Panels, a neat shortcut is to simply right-click on the Network

Neighbourhood icon on your desktop and then select Properties from the pop-up menu that appears. If you insist on doing it the hard way, click on the Start button, select Settings, then click Control Panels. Double-click the Network icon and you're away.

2. NETWORK

When the network dialogue appears, you should see your new card sitting by itself in the top portion of the screen. If you have dial-up networking (DUN) installed, you will also see various DUN components accompanying it. We now need to add the TCP/IP protocol, the set of rules that establish how our PC will communicate with external machines, and bind it to the network card. Click the Add button.

3. SELECT COMPONENT

We're about to add the TCP/IP protocol, so highlight the Protocol option in the Network Components dialogue and press the Add button.

4. SELECT PROTOCOL

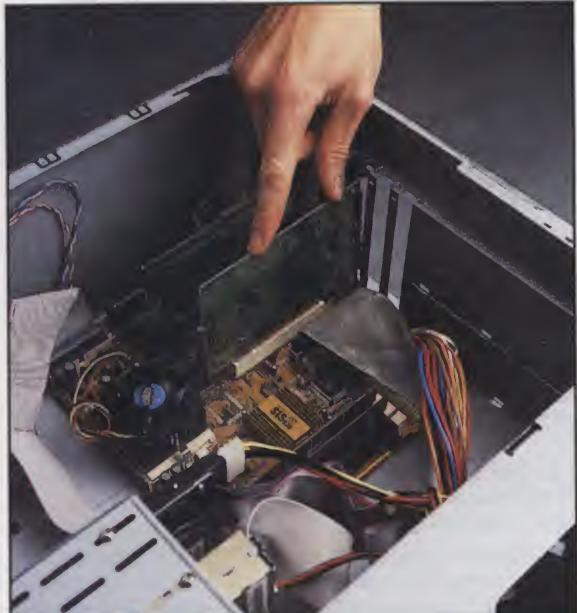
Click Microsoft in the left hand column of manufacturers, and select TCP/IP from the list of available protocols in the right hand column. Note the presence of the IPX/SPX protocol, as you'll need to come back to this screen and add it in later if you wish to play older titles such as *Doom* (or even some awkward new ones like *Tiberian Sun*).

5. NETWORK

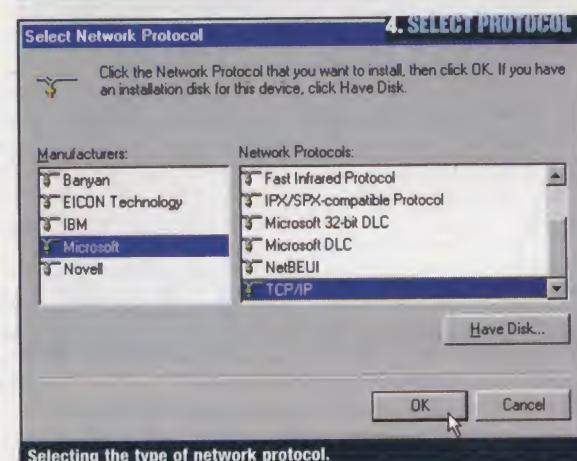
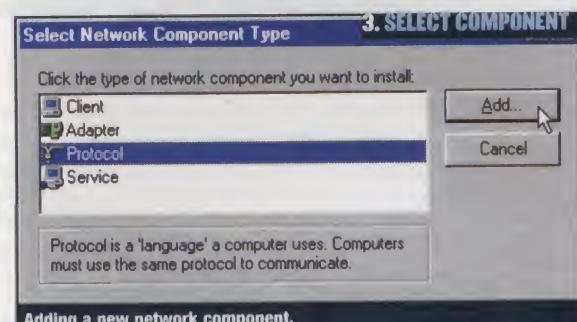
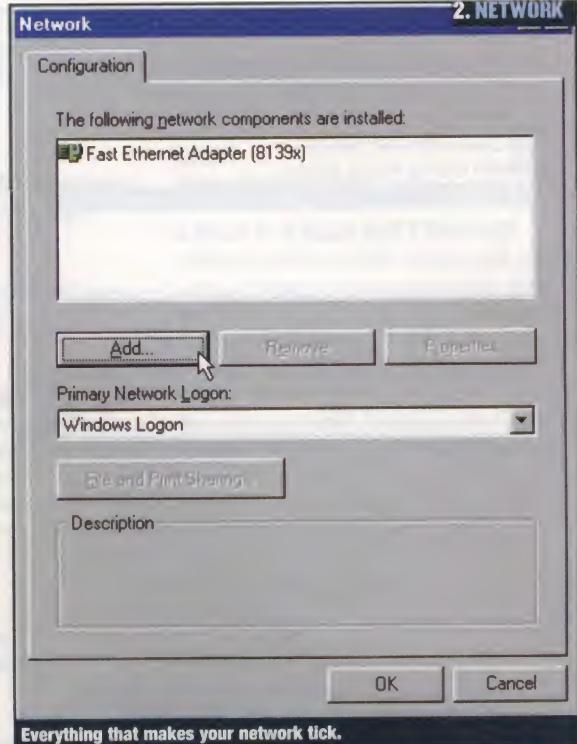
OK, so now we're back to the Network dialogue, where you can clearly see we've got our new card, a new protocol and something called Client for Microsoft Networks. This is automatically added whenever you add a new protocol and don't already have a Client in place. It allows you to connect directly to other PCs running Windows and gain access to their files and devices.

6. TCP/IP PROPERTIES TAB

Now we need to identify this system on the network, for which we need a unique address. Look upon an IP address as a unique 'telephone number' that other PCs on the network 'dial', in order to contact your machine. But hold on a minute. You can be pretty sure of choosing a unique number for



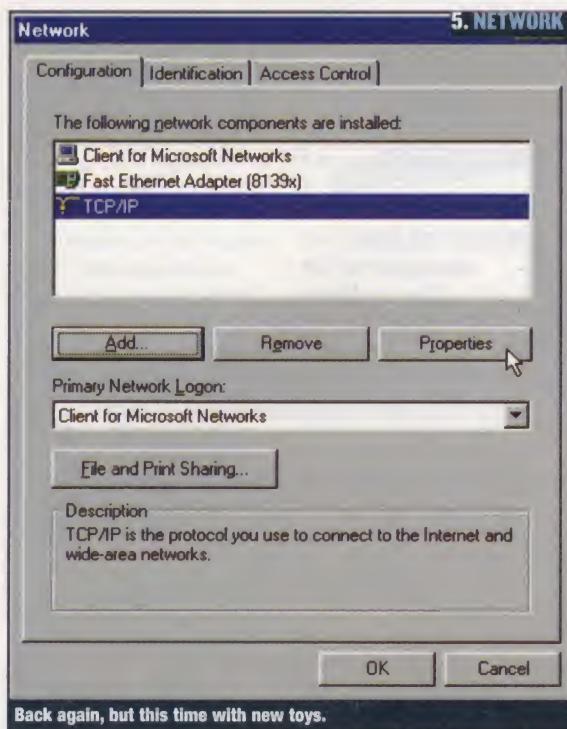
Make sure the card is seated firmly and that you screw it to the metal rigging. You don't want it popping out or working loose when you insert and remove the cable.



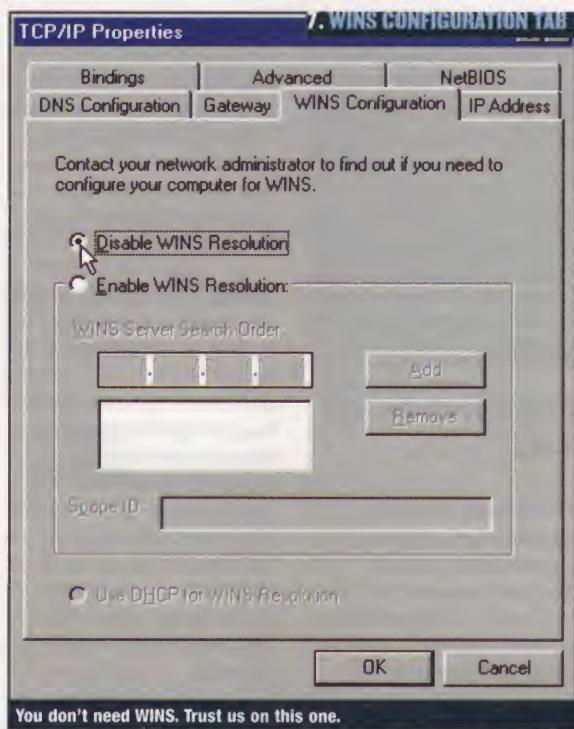
your network, but what if you ever connect to the Internet? There's quite a high chance that the number you select will already be in use by someone else. So, for local area networks, stick to special sequences, numbers that are set aside for internal private networks. For your setup, use 192.168.0.x, where x is any number between 1 and 254. It's best to use the numbers incrementally, so use 192.168.0.1 for the first machine, 192.168.0.2 for the second, and so on. Now, let's move on to the WINS tab.

7. WINS CONFIGURATION TAB

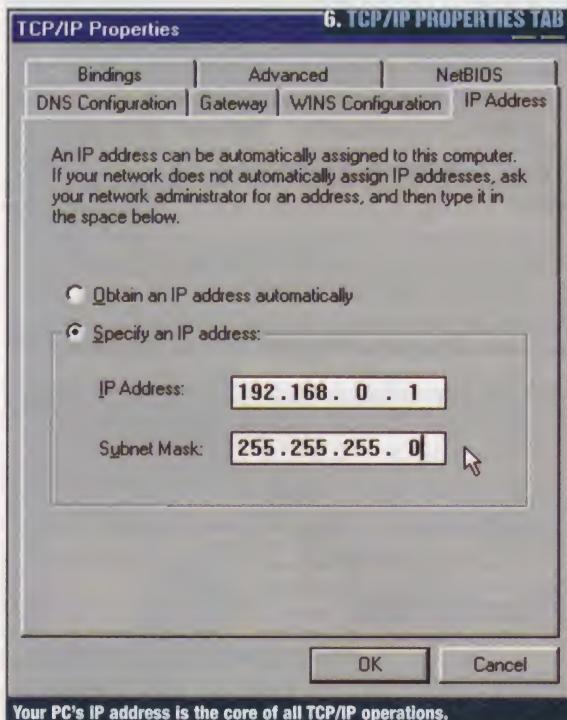
Windows Internet Naming Service (WINS) is a system used on Windows NT workgroup servers to track and apply IP address changes automatically. This is chiefly to ensure that networks don't have duplicate



Back again, but this time with new toys.



You don't need WINS. Trust us on this one.



Your PC's IP address is the core of all TCP/IP operations.

→ addresses within them, and to enable machines to be added and removed without the system administrator renumbering everything. Unless you're connecting to an NT network (you're almost certainly not, and if you are, you're mad), ensure all WINS options are disabled.

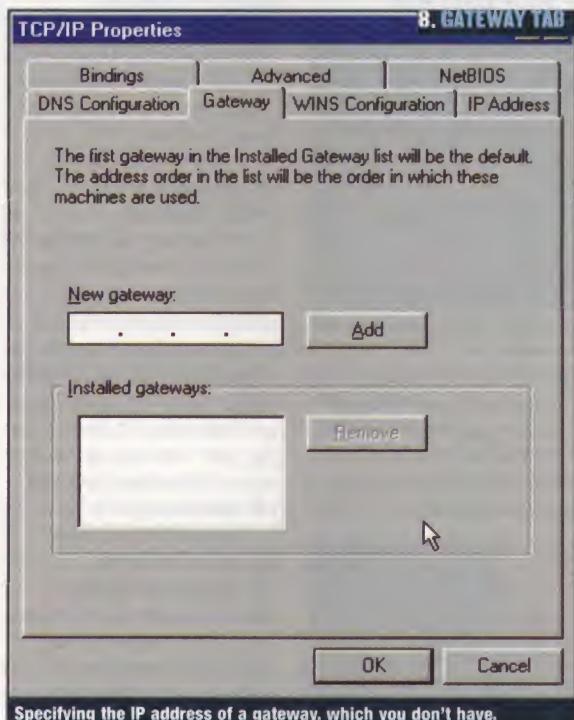
8. GATEWAY TAB

You don't have a gateway, so make sure everything here is blank. In case you're interested, a gateway refers to a machine that is connected to the Internet, either indirectly via something like a modem or ISDN adaptor, or

directly via a permanent linkup. By specifying an IP address in this dialogue, TCP/IP requests from machines on your network are routed via the gateway machine and on to the Internet. So, when you type 'www.microsoft.com', Windows knows to interrogate the gateway and not to go hunting around the machines in your bedroom.

9. DNS CONFIGURATION

Numbers here will only confuse things – you don't need a DNS here unless you're connecting to the Internet via a gateway. In



Specifying the IP address of a gateway, which you don't have.

“It's the job of the DNS to translate all the names that humans can easily remember into numbers that they can't”

case you've always wondered what the hell a DNS (domain name system) is anyway, we'll tell you. Put simply, it's a machine that translates domain names (eg. pczone.co.uk) into IP addresses (eg. 193.128.6.153). Networks need sequences of numbers, not sequences of letters or phrases, to identify different machines. So it's the job of the DNS to translate all the names that humans can easily

remember into numbers that they can't. Now press the OK button to confirm the protocol setup.

10. SHARE AND ENJOY

We're now going to add file and printer sharing to allow other network users access to the data on your disk. Back at the main Network dialogue (as per points above), click the Add button and choose Service from the list of

components. Press Add again and then choose File and printer sharing for Microsoft Networks. This allows other Windows users on your network access to the files that you share on your machine – fear not, though, for you can always restrict access with passwords or even choose not to share anything at all. Press the OK button and you're done.

11. IDENTIFICATION

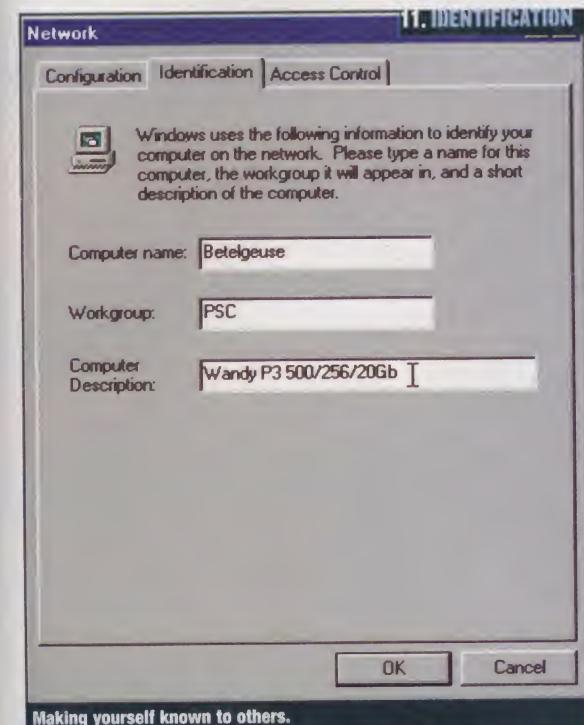
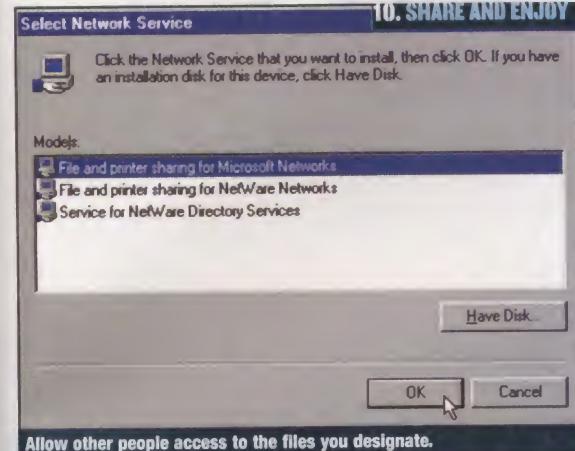
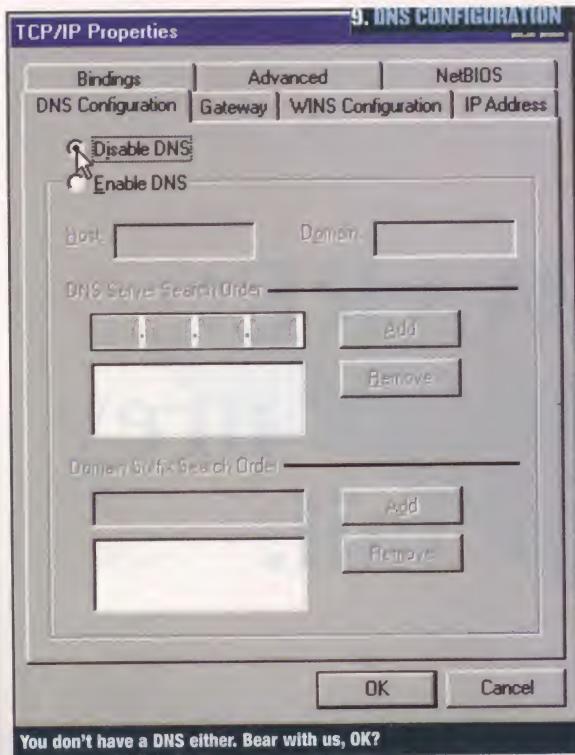
Click the Identification tab at the top of the Network dialogue, and give your computer a name to identify it on the LAN. This can be anything you like, up to 15 characters in length, although make sure you don't include spaces – Windows is stupid enough to allow blanks and it will only cause trouble later. Now, choose a name for your Workgroup. This is simply a group of computers – nothing more complex than that. All you have to do is make sure other machines on your LAN belong to the same workgroup. Next, describe the computer. This isn't mandatory, but can be useful on larger networks, as the description appears in the Windows Explorer pane. The standard we use at PCZ is; the owner of the computer, the processor, the memory installed and the total hard disk storage available. Press the OK button.

Once you've finished farting around in the dialogues, Windows will again need to copy across various driver files and related paraphernalia in order to make your network functional. Restart your machine when prompted.

In order to share files and folders (ie. so that other machines can see your drives), you'll need either to right-click on drive icons or on a top-level folder and choose 'Sharing' from the pop-up menu that appears. Assign a meaningful name and hit the OK button and – hey presto! That particular folder or drive will be accessible from anywhere else on the LAN. Easy or what?

ALMOST FORGOT... GAMES

Once your network is alive and you can see stuff on other machines, multiplayer games should have no trouble in talking to one another. The easiest way to test this out is by firing up one of the 'old faithfuls' such as Quake or Half-Life – multiplayer in either of these two chaps is not only dead simple, it's bullet-proof. So if it works here, it'll work anywhere. Enjoy. 



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

10-BASE-2

Ethernet standard allowing data transmission speed of up to 10Mbps across thin coax.

10-BASE-5

Ethernet standard allowing data transmission speed of up to 10Mbps across thick coax.

10-BASE-T

Ethernet standard allowing data transmission speed of up to 10Mbps across twisted pair cable. The system operates over two pairs of wires, one pair used for receive data signals and the other pair used for transmit data signals. Usually used in conjunction with Hubs.

100-BASE-T

Fast Ethernet allowing data transmission speeds of up to 1 Mbps. See also 10-BASE-T.

BNC

Bayonet Nell-Concelman, a connector used to hook a workstation up to coaxial cable in a 10-BASE-T Ethernet LAN.

CAT 5

Category 5 twisted pair wire, most commonly seen culminating in RJ45 connector jacks. Cabling designed to handle Fast Ethernet traffic. Looks almost identical to regular telephone wire, but in fact it's very different underneath the plastic coating. See also UTP.

CLIENT

The receiving end of network information. See also Server.

COAX

Coaxial cable comprises one central channel carrying the signal, surrounded by an outer channel, which serves as a ground. Limited to 10Mbps transmission speeds, both thick and thin coax were popular for desktop connections until the twisted pair system was developed.

DIAGNOSTIC LEDS

Illuminations on the front of hubs and the rear of cards allowing you to see at a glance whether network traffic is flowing.

ETHERNET

The most common LAN technology.

FAST ETHERNET

See 100-BASE-T.

GIGABIT ETHERNET

Ethernet standard allowing data transmission speed of up to 1000Mbps. It is expensive, and not for the home gamer.

HUB

A piece of networking hardware, outwardly not that different from an external modem, designed to accept connections from one or more workstations and to forward the data in one or more other directions.

LAN

See Local Area Network.

LOCAL AREA NETWORK

Typically comprises either coaxial cable (BNC) or special grades of twisted pair wires (UTP), together with network cards installed on two or more workstations.

MBPS

Megabits per second. In other words, how much information can be transmitted across your LAN in one second. Games will only need 10Mbps, but with 100Mbps kit so close in price, the decision is easy.

NETWORK SPEED

See Mbps.

NODE

Any hardware (eg. a hub, a workstation, or even a phone system or burglar alarm) with a unique address on the network.

OPERATING DISTANCE

The maximum length of cable permissible before packet loss is experienced.

PACKET LOSS

When networking equipment becomes overwhelmed, or the maximum operating distance of cable is exceeded, bytes of data may be 'dropped' by the client with the assumption that it will be re-transmitted by the server. This causes a decline in network speed.

REPEATER HUB

See Hub.

RJ45

An RJ45 jack is an eight-conductor jack comprising four pairs of wire. Usually seen on the end of telephone wire and on UTP cable.

SERVER

The sending end of network information. See also Client.

T-PIECE

Special connector that mates up with the BNC socket on the back of a network card. It allows two segments of cable to pass into the back of the card rather than just the one.

TERMINATOR

Used to 'block' the unused socket of a T-piece and to stop network signals spilling out onto your carpet.

THICK COAX

Not used for home networking. See 10-BASE-5 and coax.

THIN COAX

See coax.

UTP

Unshielded Twisted-Pair. A type of networking cable. See also Cat 5.

FALCONS BEWARE:
There's a NEW bird of prey
on your tail.

FLANKER 2.0TM



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COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN

STRATEGY GUIDE - PART 1

Elite tipster **Keith Pullin** braves the forces of Kane and returns safely to the headquarters. That's right – this month we proudly present the eagerly awaited *Tiberian Sun* walkthrough

★ REVIEWED PCZ #81 SCORE 90%

Over the next two months we'll deliver the entire mission-by-mission solution for both GDI and NOD forces. We'll also throw in some expert strategies, as well as a whole host of other useful titbits. By the time we've finished with you, you're going to know more about this game than Westwood.

GDI - PART 1

1 REINFORCE PHOENIX BASE

Set up a refinery after repelling the initial attacks. Have two groups of four light infantry protect the base and fend off any further attacks. Send another two groups northeast to the NOD installations and destroy everything. Kill off the remaining NOD forces located around the Tiberium fields to complete the mission.



● You don't need much force to destroy this minimal NOD base.

GDI REINFORCE PHOENIX BASE

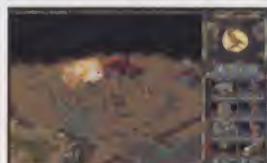


2 SECURE REGION

Quickly erect a base by the Tiberium field. Amass a force of disc throwers, infantry and Wolverines. Destroy the SAM sites directly to the east and the one just north of those. Send your forces round the road to the south/southeast, destroying any remaining SAM sites as you go. Once you've passed through the settlement and reached the enemy stronghold, reinforce with disc throwers and Wolverines. You can now storm the enemy base and complete the mission.



● You cannot complete this mission unless every SAM site has been destroyed.



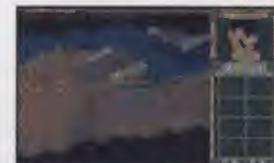
● A reasonable force can finish off the NOD base to the north.

3 CAPTURE TRAIN STATION [OPTIONAL]

Move west until you see the relay

station. Send an engineer to capture it – this triggers handy reinforcements. Send the whole group west along the rock face, and then south onto the plateau. Capture the other relay station on the east side of this plateau for more reinforcements. Gather your troops and head north over the bridge. Continue along this road removing enemies and repairing bridges where necessary. Eventually you will pass through a small settlement and reach the top of the map. Move west, destroy the small NOD base and send an engineer into the train station to capture it.

NB If you complete this optional mission NOD, you should receive fewer reinforcements on the next mission...



● Send mechanics into bridge huts to repair them.



● Send a mechanic into the train station to capture it.

3. LOCATE AND SECURE CRASH SITE

Build your base to the west of the ruined city. Get a second Harvester going sharpish. Set up perimeter defences and then use about a dozen Titans to attack the

GDI LOCATE AND SECURE CRASH SITE

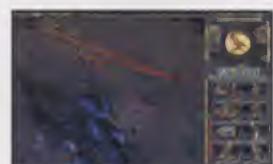


Capture the tech centre and then head back south to the crash site.

NOD position to the east.

Destroy or capture any troops or structures and consolidate. Add Wolverines and disc throwers to your main force, then move northeast under the bridge. Climb onto the bridge and charge the base on the north side. You need a big force, but you only need to capture the enemy tech centre. With that done, withdraw to the consolidation point. Reinforce your army with plenty of Titans

and invade the crash site to the south. When that area is secure the level is complete.

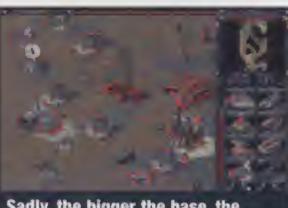


● Time to target the guns that attempt to destroy the crashed alien spaceship.

BUILD, BUILD, BUILD

Home improvements can really pay off!

Never rest on your laurels. Money in the bank is money wasted, so always expand your base. Make sure you're well defended too – a liberal mixture of anti-aircraft and anti-infantry guns is best. If you still have spare cash, build an extra war factory or anything that allows you to increase your forces quicker. If you're really struggling to spend all your money, try setting up extra concrete defences around your primary structures – the safer they are the longer you survive.



Sadly, the bigger the base, the harder it is to destroy.

TITAN POWER

Big, big toys for big, big boys

Titans are fantastic machines! Their laser weapon has a very long range allowing them to take out enemy defences without being seen. Lasers, Vulcan cannons, and badly protected structures can all suffer fatally at the hands of a disciplined Titan regiment.



A devastated base bows to the might of the Titan's laser.

4 DEFEND CRASH SITE

This is just too easy. Just keep churning out light infantry and disc throwers to back up your existing forces. As long as you don't do anything stupid, this level is extremely straightforward.



Most of NOD's forces attack from the north, but beware of sporadic forays from the west too.

5 DESTROY RADAR ARRAY [OPTIONAL]

March east, killing everyone you see and gaining reinforcements as you go. Bear south slightly to take out the Hand of Nod. Head northeast until you come to a ridge patrolled by NOD rocket infantry. When you move up onto the ridge to attack them, you run into a largish force and are ambushed. You should eventually win the battle, but the most important thing is to keep your medic(s) safe. Heal everyone and head south to the NOD base. Use the Titans to destroy the lasers, and then move the infantry in. Destroy all structures. Now that NOD can't reinforce its existing troops, it's easy to manoeuvre around the map taking out the radar and relay stations.

NB Although only optional, it is highly recommended that you complete this mission as it considerably shortens the next.

6 RESCUE TRATOS

An interesting mission – in so far as you control a small band of mutants, rather than humans. From the start, head west and use the mutant hijacker to capture the Tick Tank. Destroy the jeep before it drives away, and then go west into the Tiberium field. Here you pick up a Tiberium Fiend who seems to be one of the mutant's pets, so don't harm him and he'll help you out. It's also worth remembering that mutants heal in Tiberium fields,

6 DESTROY VEGA'S DAM [OPTIONAL]

Protect your forces, don't take unnecessary risks and use your Titans cunningly as you want as little trouble as possible on this mission until you get to the far north of the map. Just keep following the path, fighting enemies and receiving reinforcements as you go. When you get to the small NOD encampment, ignore it and turn south. You will reach the middle of a bridge, from where you can hit one of Vega's dams with a couple of Titans. It may take a while but you can destroy the dam from here. Move your forces across to the other side of the bridge and

so if you're injured it's a good idea to come back here.

When ready, destroy the checkpoint to the west and cross the bridge. Sneak into the medical compound via the southeast corner while the other Tiberium Fiends divert the guards. Send Umagon into the medical centre to rescue Tratos, and then run like hell back to the start. An Orca transport extracts Tratos and reinforcements arrive.

Start building your base in the northeast and then when you have a sizeable force of Titans, flood west to the NOD base. Take out the power plants first, and then the rest of the buildings.

If you're attempting this mission without completing the previous optional mission, you have to go the long way round when rescuing Tratos. This also means that you have to breach the main gate, which is nigh on impossible, but that's the price you pay for not taking out their radar array.

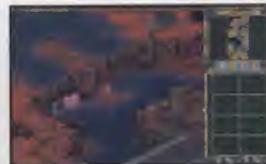
6 DESTROY VEGA'S BASE

If you didn't complete the optional mission, patrol the surrounding area until you've destroyed the seven SAM sites. With that done, reinforcements arrive and you can establish your base. If you did complete the optional mission you can start building your base instantly. Get three or four Harvesters on the job as quickly as possible and build up a large stronghold with heavy defences and pavement interiors to stop subterranean APCs attacking.

Cross the bridge to the west with a medium force of Titans and take out NODs perimeter defences. Concentrate on SAM sites especially. Return (what's

concentrate on using the Titans to destroy the defences and take out the power plants. Finally, move your force in closer to the remaining dam and destroy it.

NB Although difficult, it is once again advisable that you complete this optional mission, as doing so gives you instant reinforcements on the next.



1 Evidence of the Titan's long-range attack capabilities. In this instance, it's the dam that's about to go up in smoke.



1 Ignore this NOD base and relay station, attacking it just wastes valuable troops.

left of) this force to a safe place. Send in another wave of Titans, Wolverines and infantry to attack the main gate of the base. Keep about ten Titans back, and send ten in with the main force. Work again on taking out any SAM sites within the base. When the air defences are down you can send a few Orca fighters over to destroy the main structures. Remember also to back up your attack force with the Titans at the rear, and bring in the remains of the earlier group. This is a difficult mission, and it may take a few attempts, so save at crucial moments and don't lose faith. Finally, destroy Vega's Pyramid and the mission is over.



1 The bridge is your first obstacle. Use Titans to destroy it and then keep a few engineers stationed nearby in case repairs are needed.



1 Once you've sacked the base, surround Vega's pyramid and destroy it.

NOD – PART 1

1 THE MESSIAH RETURNS

Start by building a refinery. When the Harvester heads north, send some light infantry for protection. At this point, your base comes under fire. Use your original infantry to defend yourself, but make sure you get a Hand of Nod up and running quickly to provide reinforcements. When a dozen or so units are available, split them into two squads and send them out to clean up the rest of the map.



1 Look out for enemies burrowing into your base with subterranean APCs.

2 RETALIATION

Build up your base slightly to the west of the fields near the gate of Hassan's small base. You are constantly attacked here but,



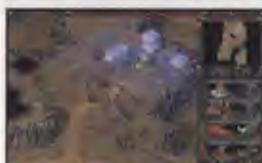
At the back of the medical centre: the Ghoststalker can take out the Hand of Nod structure with one shot.



providing you get a Harvester or two going, it won't take long to build up a sizeable force with plenty of attack buggies. Smash through Hassan's feeble defences and keep going to capture the unguarded TV station and end the mission.



① Destroy this base to the southeast of the map in order to quell the amount of enemy reinforcements arriving.



① The TV station is unguarded and easy to capture.

3 FREE REBEL NOD COMMANDER [OPTIONAL]

Move to the southwest and eliminate the soldiers by the tunnel. On the other side of the tunnel, send your force into the base. Kill the guards but leave the buildings intact. Quickly shoot the trucks to free the infantry and engineers. Capture the Hand of Nod, the refinery and a power plant.

Start producing engineers and capture the other structures. Now train up a meaty force of rocket and light infantry. Send an engineer to repair the bridge to the east, and then pour your army into Hassan's base. Primary

targets are the Tick Tank and laser. When the laser is down, the Rebel NOD commander escapes. Escort him back to the starting point of the mission, ensuring he doesn't get killed to accomplish your goal.

NB Completing this optional outing serves to deprive Hassan of reinforcements in the next mission.



① Keep producing engineers, capture everything here and make sure you establish this area as your primary base.

3 DESTROY HASSAN'S TEMPLE AND CAPTURE HIM

From the start, trundle across the bridge and kill everyone but not everything – reinforcements will arrive, allowing you to capture the structures. An MCV will also turn up, so start a refinery and harvest the Tiberium to the southwest. Erect strong base defences to protect the exposed west flank of your base. Four lasers and three Tick Tanks work efficiently.

Amass a small offensive force and sack the minor base to the west. Now fix the bridge to the east and move a fair size group of infantry across. Capture the Hand of Nod on the opposite side and continue to swell your assault force. When it's ripe with Tick Tanks and infantry, march north with some engineers to shatter the main base. Destroy the

Pyramid to capture Hassan and trigger the end of the mission.

4 BLACKOUT [OPTIONAL]

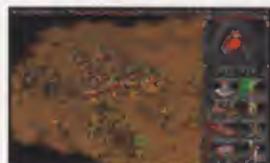
Keep going northeast at the start until you reach a peninsula with a broken bridge. Build your base here. You are totally safe from attack in this location, so spend some time building up a force of Tick Tanks and cyborgs.

When you have about ten tanks and the same number of cyborgs, repair the bridge and head north to the small GDI outpost. Kill all personnel and take over the buildings with engineers. Build a dozen Titans to strengthen your army and move west down the slope into the main GDI encampment. When you destroy or capture the radar station, the mission will end.

NB Completing this mission prevents the appearance of another GDI base in the south, meaning fewer reinforcements for existing enemy forces.



① There's not much room, but this peninsula is the perfect place to build a safe base.



① Build up a solid force of Titans, flood down the hill, into the base and eradicate all opposition. Easy.

GDI DESTROY HASSAN'S TEMPLE AND CAPTURE HIM



Lasers on the west of your base can fend off the constant attacks.

GDI DESTROY HASSAN'S TEMPLE AND CAPTURE HIM



Destroy the temple to capture Hassan.

4 EVICTION NOTICE

Climb onto the plateau to the west and destroy the car on the train tracks. This causes the train to roll downhill and destroy the first enemy turret. Establish your base on the plateau, get two or three harvester going and create a force of Tick Tanks, buggies and cyborgs. Send your initial troops east and let them cause havoc in the GDI Tiberium fields.

When you've destroyed their Harvester, head into the city and edge northwards. Attack the GDI base from the northeast, and while this attack is ongoing, bring your main army in to attack the front gate. Raze the base and move to the top left-hand corner of the map to find the temple.

GDI EVICTION NOTICE



The old ruins are found at the top left-hand corner of the map. Ignore the mutants who escape once you've secured the area.

GDI FREE REBEL NOD COMMANDER



A strong force of rocket infantry can easily free the NOD rogue.



① Let the runaway train do the dirty work for you.

5 SALVAGE OPERATION

Kill the guards at the train station and then follow the left set of train tracks. On this mission you receive no reinforcements at all, so take good care of your meagre force – especially the engineers. When you pass the second bridge, destroy the Titan, then continue following the tracks.

GDI SALVAGE OPERATION

Goal: The Tacitus is gone. Vega's men have grabbed it. Looks like they're going to ship it out via bullet train.
Objective 2: Retrieve the cargo from the train.



If you head west from the UFO, you'll reach the bullet train and the Tacitus – whatever that is.

When you reach another small train station, turn south until you come across the crash site. Send an engineer into the craft. Move the rest of your group around to the west side of the ship and keep going west along the canyon until you can climb south onto the plateau. Here there is another station. Destroy the guards, then the train, and then walk into the Tacitus to complete the mission.



Destroy the train and the Tacitus appears. Move a unit over it to complete the mission.

6 [PART ONE, FIRST CHOICE] LOCATE AND CAPTURE UMAGON

Set up your base and use the artillery unit to guard the western

bridge and defend this area with laser turrets. Build up a glorious army and march into enemy territory via the eastern bridge. Push this army along to the top left-hand corner of the map and position it by the tunnel in time for when Umagon's train emerges. You automatically win the level.



If you wait by the tunnel entrance here, Umagon will be instantly captured.

6 [PART ONE, SECOND CHOICE] LOCATE AND CAPTURE UMAGON

Forget about this. Just complete the previous mission instead – it's a lot easier and a lot quicker. If you do choose to take this one on, be prepared to build up a massive force.

GDI LOCATE AND CAPTURE UMAGON



Once again, lasers prove their worth in defence.

GDI SHEEP'S CLOTHING



Use six Titans to annihilate the first mutant base.

6 [PART TWO] SHEEP'S CLOTHING

The continuous attacks by mutant camper vans, etc in this mission can be draining on your resources so capture the barracks near the start and begin to expand your 'GDI' base. When you feel that you are well defended enough, throw six Titans into the mutant camp to the southeast. When that is destroyed, add a further six Titans to your force and charge northeast to demolish the main mutant encampment. Don't forget the helipads – make sure you hit these to stop the mutant choppers rearming. Resistance is generally weak by this stage and you shouldn't have too many problems destroying the rest of the base. ☐

GDI SHEEP'S CLOTHING



Smoking Titans survive to ransom the final mutant base.

SUPPORT UNITS

Healing hands give long-term benefits

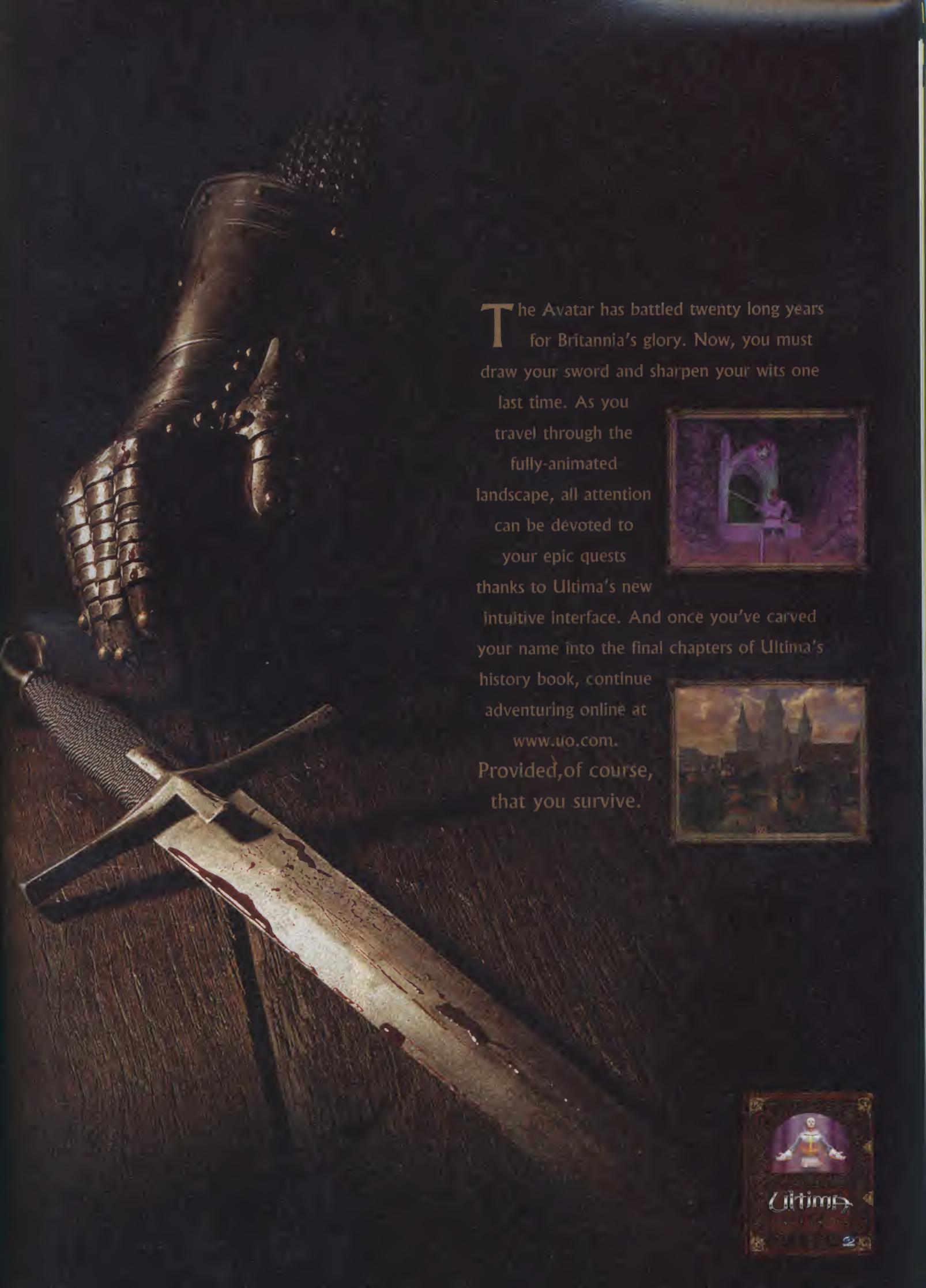
Although short on firepower, engineers and medics form an integral part of your attack strategy. Constant healing from a medic means units can eventually reach Elite status, making them more intelligent and harder to kill.

Some missions can only be completed with the assistance of a medic – indeed the same goes for engineers. Keep them both in the frontline of your attack, but remember to ensure that they are well protected.

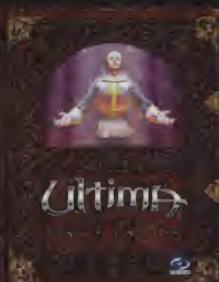


These units have been looked after, and have risen to Elite status.

REMEMBER
IF YOU DIE A
HERO
YOU'RE STILL
DEAD.



The Avatar has battled twenty long years for Britannia's glory. Now, you must draw your sword and sharpen your wits one last time. As you travel through the fully-animated landscape, all attention can be devoted to your epic quests thanks to Ultima's new intuitive interface. And once you've carved your name into the final chapters of Ultima's history book, continue adventuring online at www.uo.com. Provided, of course, that you survive.



SYSTEM SHOCK 2

PLAYER'S GUIDE: PART 2

Paul Mallinson kindly shares his wisdom with everyone desperate to complete *System Shock 2*

★ REVIEWED PCZ #80 SCORE 95%

The second part of our *System Shock 2* guide proves just how good a game it is. The variation in the levels is truly outstanding, and the plot unfurls

in a dramatic manner. And, just when you thought it was all going to come to an end, the story branches out in another direction and you get a new weapon to play with...

COMMAND

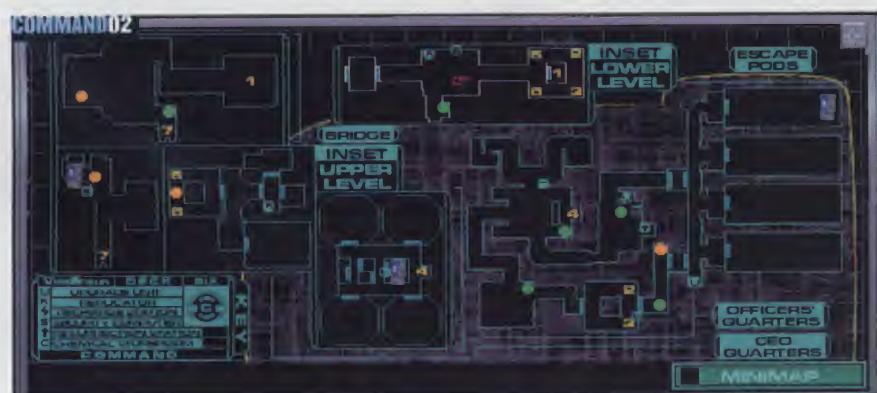
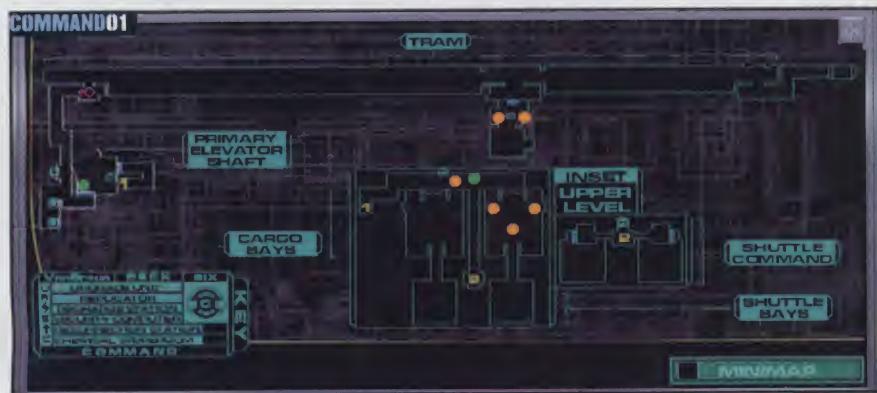
The Many has infested so much of the Von Braun that it seems like a good idea to scuttle her and escape aboard the Rickenbacker. It's going to take some high level

access to do that, however. You'll need to use a restricted computer on the Operations Deck to open a data channel to the Rickenbacker, and then go to the Engineering Deck and set up the engines for a remotely activated self-destruct. Your associates can get the self-destruct code for you, but you'll need to retrieve the Ops Override access card yourself.

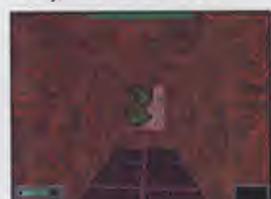
The Ops Override Card is kept on the Bridge, which is locked, so you'll need to search for the Bridge access card. It can be found near one of the Escape Pods (apparently some crew

level of the Bridge, in a small niche behind some glass. This is an emergency, so go ahead and break that glass.

Return to the Operations Deck, and go to the Command Centre in Sector D. The Ops Override card gives access to a terminal from where you can open the data channel to the Rickenbacker. Then go back to Engineering and head to Core Control to arm the self-destruct mechanism. Finally, return to Command.



member dropped it in their rush to escape). You might find it convenient to pick up the Shuttle access card at this time, since you'll need it later. The Shuttle access card is in a locked Security Station in the Officer's Quarters. If you search the lockers in the nearby rooms, you'll find a log that has the code to the Security Station. The Ops Override card can be found on the upper



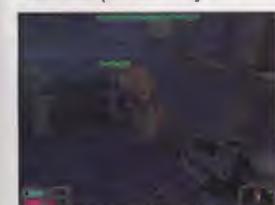
When you arrive back on Command, you'll find that The Many has placed a number of their Eggs on board the Command Shuttles, in an attempt to escape the coming destruction of the Von Braun. In order to avoid having to do this all over again later, destroy the shuttles before they escape. They are protected by shield generators, which can be turned off from the Shuttle Control area, above the Shuttle Bays. One of the shuttles proves to be straightforward to deal with, just

bring down the shield, then destroy the shuttle with whatever weaponry comes to hand. The Many realises what you are doing however, and sabotages the control computer for the other shield generator, making it impossible to turn off the shield. The shield generator can be destroyed by attaching a Sympathetic Resonator to it.



To get a Sympathetic Resonator, you'll need to hack the replicator just outside Shuttle Control (an associate of yours uploads the design into the replicator remotely). This is an easy hack, but if you have no hack skill whatsoever, you'll either need to acquire that skill, or find an ICE-Pick.

When the shuttles are destroyed, you'll escape to the Rickenbacker, but find your way blocked by a psionic barrier. You'll get an email message from Anatoly Korenchkin (who has been mutated by The Many into a Psi Reaver) telling you to meet him on the Bridge. In order to bring down the psionic barrier, you'll have to kill Korenchkin. Psi Reavers are extremely hard to destroy... until you know their weakness (not that they are

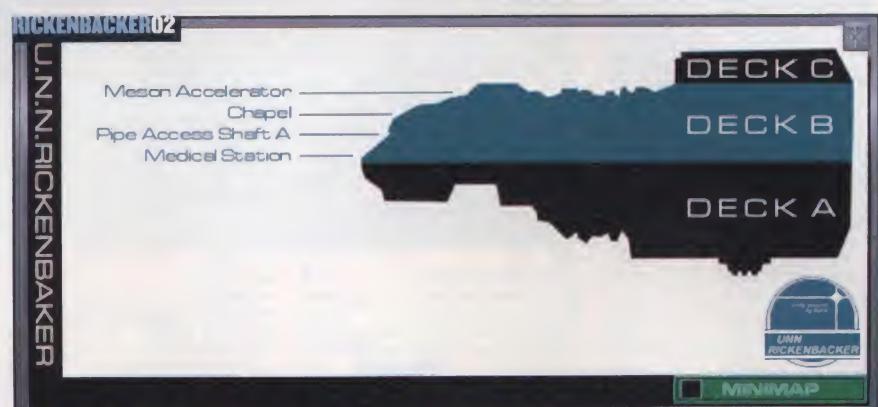
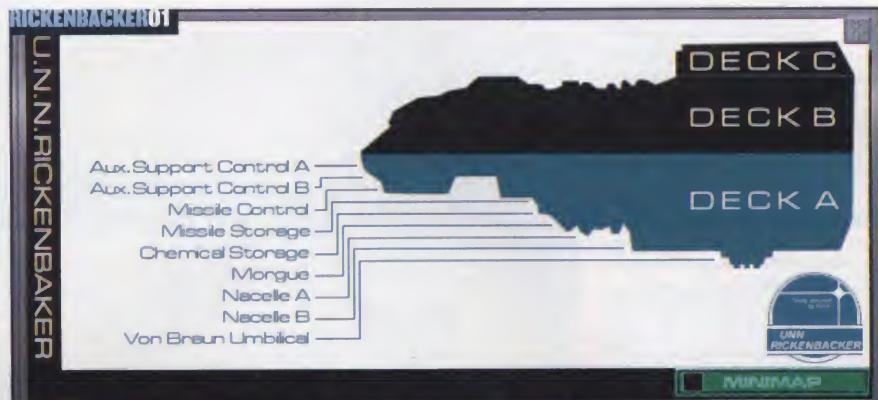


all that easy even then). Make sure you've found and read the log from Prefontaine that discusses "Floating psi-users" before going to this fight. After defeating him, proceed through the grav shaft to the Rickenbacker.

New enemies on this deck include: Rumbler, Blast Turrets, and a single Psi Reaver (Korenchkin) at the end.

RICKENBACKER

The Rickenbacker has been infested with a new form of Annelid Egg. While they are no immediate threat to you, if allowed to mature they will hatch a new generation of monsters that you would have no hope of defeating. Hence, you must



destroy all 16 Eggs before you can escape. They're quite visually distinctive and emit a slight



buzzing sound, so you should find them all easily if you stay alert. All of them are somewhere in Pod 1.

The Rickenbacker has taken some serious damage due to sabotage. You'll see a massive hull breach that's covered only by a force field. A room on the other side of the hull breach contains an access card that you'll need to get through the Rickenbacker, so you'll have to get over there. You can extend some support struts to partially cross the hull breach, but eventually you're going to have to

make a careful jump to get there, and another one to get back (remember: the better your agility, the faster you'll run and the further you'll jump). In order to avoid triggering another hull breach in Pod 2, you'll have to reverse its artificial gravity before entering it. To do this, you must

find the control computer for the gravitonic generators inside Nacelle B.

Eventually, you will find a large room with two torpedoes along each wall and a control station in the centre. The buttons on the control station raise and lower the torpedoes. The

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THOSE NEW MONSTERS

PSI REAVERS:

Knock out floating Psi Reavers using anti-personnel bullets, then quickly locate and destroy the brain structure before it rejuvenates.

INVISIBLE ANNELID ARACHNIDS:

Watch out for these sneaking up on you! Listen out for their horrible hissing noise and shoot them with auto-fire at a distance.

CHEATS

To access the cheats, you need to bring up the 'console'. To do that, simply hit Shift and ';' (semicolon) together during the game.

To give yourself full psi points, type 'psi_full', then hit Enter.

To 'max out' your stats and become something of a cyborg ninja type

STRENGTH
ENDURANCE
PSIONICS
AGILITY
CYBER





Don't suck the nerve clusters – shoot them instead.

ladder to Pod 2 was in this room, but has been broken off at the bottom. In order to get to the intact part of the ladder, you'll have to use the torpedoes in a fairly complex way. Note: if you haven't received an email message confirming that there is only one Egg left to destroy, you should go back and look for the ones you missed before going on through this puzzle.

While facing the control panel, raise the two torpedoes on your left as high as they will go, and also raise the rear torpedo on your right. Turn right, and step onto the torpedo that you left in the lowered position. There is a ledge behind it that you can mantle on to. Move right along the ledge, and near the back of the room you will see a raised platform crossing to the other side. Jump to that platform and cross the room. On the other side of the room, step onto the raised torpedoes. Run along the length of the torpedoes, and jump onto the ladder at the

corridor filled with very high radiation levels. While it is theoretically possible to get through the radiation and live (if you have good enough stats and equipment), there's a simple way to clear the radiation from the corridor. The radiation is leaking out of a torpedo cluster adjacent to the corridor. Nearby, you'll find a control room with a button that will let you launch that torpedo into space. Once the torpedo is gone, the radiation will also be gone.

When you reach the elevator up to Pod 2, you should find the final Egg beside it. You may now pass through the upside-down Pod 2 and proceed to the Bridge of the Rickenbacker.



Unfortunately, when you get there, you discover that the biomass of The Many is now completely wrapped around the outside of the ship, preventing you from separating from the Von Braun. In order to have any hope of escape, you'll have to try to

destroy The Many once and for all... from the inside. Use a Rickenbacker Escape Pod to launch yourself into the belly of the beast.



Before you do this, you may want to accumulate as much weaponry and ammunition as you can (not forgetting to check out Diego's quarters for strange alien weaponry) because once you enter The Many, there's no going back...

New enemies on the Rickenbacker Include: Invisible Annelid Arachnids and many Mk II Laser Turrets.

THE MANY

Once inside The Many, you'll need to get through a few closed Sphincters (equivalent to locked doors). The Sphincters are controlled by Nerve Clusters. To open them, destroy all the Nerve Clusters you can find.

Your progress will also occasionally be blocked by

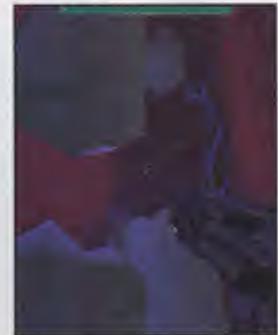


Make your own platform.

far end. From here, you can continue climbing.

As you continue through the Rickenbacker, you'll come to a

translucent membranes, but these can be easily torn apart with almost any weapon. After getting through the first Sphincter (you'll need to destroy two Nerve Clusters), you'll find yourself in the digestive tract of The Many. You'll encounter huge moving 'teeth' that grind up food once it's been ingested.



As the teeth move up and down, you can jump on and off them but be careful not to get ground between them! By riding the teeth, you can reach the last Nerve Cluster, and once it's destroyed, you can get through the last Sphincter. This leads into the area where new Annelid Eggs are created.



This is no time for that!

The exit from this area is a very high jump into a deep pool of water (Scary! – Ed). When you climb out of this pool, there's only one way to go, which leads directly to the chamber holding the Brain of the Many.

This chamber is well guarded and you can't kill all the guards, as more will keep coming. You can reduce the monster population somewhat by destroying all six Psi Reaver brain structures, but do not kill the Cyborg Midwives. Killing them will trigger immediate reinforcements. You'll notice that there are three small spiky objects travelling in irregular orbits around the Brain.

When you try to shoot the Brain, these objects will light

‘ubermensch’, then hit Enter. To get access to all the weapons, software, ammo, etc, just type: summon_obj (then any of the following items...)

MEDICAL

Medical kit
Detox patch
Med patch
Rad patch

WEAPONS

Wrench
Pistol
Shotgun
Assault rifle
Laser pistol
Emp rifle
Electro shock
Gren launcher
Stasis field generator
Fusion cannon
Crystal shard
Viral prolific
Worm launcher

AMMO

Standard clip
Ap clip
He clip
Pellet shot box
Rifled slug box
Large worm beaker
Timed grenade
EMP grenade
Incendiary grenade
Prox. grenade
Toxin grenade
Large prism

PSIONICS

Psi amp
Psi booster

HACKING

Ice pick

ARMOUR

Light armour
Medium armour
Heavy armour
Reflec armour
Vacc suit
Worm skin

UPGRADE SOFTWARE

Hack soft v3
Repair soft v3
Research soft v3
Modify soft v3

MONEY

5 nanites
10 nanites
20 nanites

IMPLANTS

Brawnboost
Endurboost
Swiftboost



SUPreme snowboarding

"SIMPLY the best

simulation EVER!"



Endorsed by
JANSPORT
AMERICA'S NO. 1 BACKPACK

APAT

**PC
snowboarding**

PCGAMING
WORLD

**SUPreme
Snowboarding**



**5 game modes including vast free-ride sections -
get off the beaten track and find fresh powder**

**9 different tracks set in differing environments,
from Alpine to Forest to Ski Resort**

Over 100 different tricks to pull off

**Day to night racing with stunning
real-time lighting effects and
variable weather conditions**

Multiplay for up to eight players

3D
Accelerator
Card Required

**PC
CD
ROM**

**Developed by
housemarque**

Also available on
GAME BOY COLOR

 **INFOGRAM**

www.supremesnowboarding.com



The very core of The Many. Shoot the satellite nodes first, then take out the central cortex.

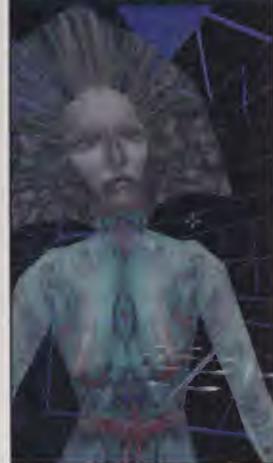
up, and the Brain will not take damage. You must take out these 'defence nodes' before you can damage the Brain itself. Once all the defence nodes have been destroyed, the Brain itself should be relatively easy to kill, as long as you can survive the attacks from the guardian creatures. Killing the Brain reveals a passage below where it was. Enter this passage to proceed to the final level.

There are no entirely new enemies inside The Many, but this is the first place you'll find large numbers of Psi Reavers.

SHODAN

In the final stage of the game, you will discover SHODAN's true plans. Read all the logs from Dr Delacroix to get a full understanding of the task ahead of you. When you find the SHODAN Core, you'll find it guarded by a SHODAN Avatar which will attack you. Don't bother trying to kill it, SHODAN

The Shodan avatar has big hair.



will just recreate it again. The SHODAN Core is also protected by rotating force fields. If you are a hacker, you can bring down the shields by hacking into all three nearby computer terminals (hacking just one or two does nothing). Be careful, though, as the floor around these computers is intermittently electrified. If you're unable to hack these computers, you'll have to bring the shields down with brute firepower. Each shield regenerates strength over time (unless completely destroyed), so use the fastest firing mode of your weapons. Once the shields are down, take out the SHODAN Core as fast as you can. (bottom)

With SHODAN and The Many both defeated, you can finally return home with the few other survivors and retire in safety... until *System Shock 3*, that is! PCZ

Smartboost
Techexpert
Wormblood
Wormheart

OTHER ITEMS

Maintenance tool
Portable battery
Speed boost
Strength boost
INT boost
French-epstein device

FOR A LAUGH

Crewwoman
Malecrew
Rumbler
Midwife

//shot = Adding crew.bmp

CHEMICALS

Type *summon_obj*, then the chemical number as taken from the list below.

For example, typing *summon_obj chem #1* will get you Fermium, and so on.

Chem #1	= Fm Fermium
Chem #2	= V Vanadium
Chem #3	= Ga Gallium
Chem #4	= Sb Antimony
Chem #5	= Y Yttrium
Chem #6	= Cu Copper
Chem #7	= Cf Californium
Chem #8	= Na Sodium
Chem #9	= Os Osmium
Chem #10	= Ir Iridium
Chem #11	= As Arsenic
Chem #12	= Cs Cesium
Chem #13	= Hs Hassium
Chem #14	= Te Tellurium
Chem #15	= Mo Molybendum
Chem #16	= Tc Technetium
Chem #17	= Ra Radium
Chem #18	= Ba Barium
Chem #19	= Se Selenium

DEAR WANDY

Evil spirits in your video card? Mouse possessed by a retarded ghost? Drop us a line and we'll help chase off the spooks

EXORCIST Phil Wand

COME IN, SIT DOWN

Send us a query or a top tip and you could pocket £50.

Share your techie or gaming-related problems with us, and we, in turn, may well share it with thousands of readers via these very pages in a big communal love-in type of thing. And as an extra incentive, every single month we offer a cool £50 to the reader who sends in the most interesting query or toppest tip. No, really.

Send in as much relevant information as you can.

WRITE TO Dear Wandy, PC ZONE, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL Address your letters to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Dear Wandy'.

Please note: while we can assure you that we read every techie query sent to us, we are unable to offer personal replies. Also, please do not phone, as you're unlikely to reach someone who can help. Thanks.

VOODOO BOO HOO

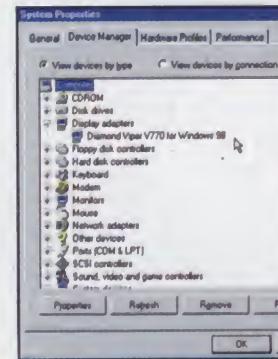
Q Having just purchased *Klingon: Honor Guard*, I was looking forward to playing it – but no! The damn thing refuses to work! I've installed it numerous times but I keep getting the same long error message. I have just upgraded my PC to a PIII 450MHz, 128Mb RAM, Voodoo 3 3000 and a SoundBlaster 128PCI. The game gave me the same grief on my other system too.

Stu

A We've been getting a lorry load of mail from people running Voodoo3 cards. From the look of the errors, it seems as though there are some weighty problems with the drivers. We'd recommend checking for updated Voodoo software on the Creative Labs website at www.creat.com, and also on the game publisher's site for any hints or patches. If that doesn't work, try a set of reference (ie universal) Voodoo3 drivers from www.3dfx.com. You should also check the version of Glide driver you are using; the latest version should also be on the Creative site. If there's still a problem, the best thing you can do is email Creative Labs direct.

3D OR NOT 3D?

Q Is there any software that will detect 3D cards on your computer? Yes, yes, I can hear you saying, 'How could I not know?' It's because I ate paint as a child, okay? And thanks for that



System Properties gives you an overhead view of everything inside your PC.

I am having trouble understanding your techie talk and would like to know what a game's AL is

KAREN COOPER
IS DESPERATELY SEEKING AL

Nocturne demo – just what I need. Pants full of shit!

John Keating

A What you do in your own trousers is your own business, Johnny boy. Anyway, to answer your question, modern video cards in modern PCs support acceleration to some degree. If you've bought your kit within the last six months, we could almost guarantee the presence of accelerator hardware – but let's find out. Right-click on my computer, and select Properties from the pop-up menu. Select the Device Manager tab and then click the plus sign next to the Display Adapters line. This will show you the name of your graphics card. If the name says Voodoo, Banshee, TNT or Rage, you should be in luck.

ICQ POO

Q The other day I went to the ICQ website to see what all the fuss was about. I was all excited about instant messaging, chat, and all the other stuff. I decided to sign up. Once the 4.69Mb file had downloaded I was raring to go. I installed it and had it working like a dream. I even registered. Then, one day later, I got a message from someone I'd been talking to the previous day. It said: "Are you sick or something, sending me that picture of that missing girl. Get a life!"

I replied and explained it wasn't me. The person suggested my ICQ was hacked. But for that to have happened the person must have found out my details and my contacts details, neither of which I had given out. I changed my ICQ and a day later got a message from Club Erotica!

I admit I'm still using the software because it's great. Unfortunately, security breaches and junk messages seem to be part of the package.

Graham Norman

A ICQ is great fun. It's like having the world's most powerful CB radio, but one that doesn't make the neighbour's telly go on the blink. The big problem with the system is that



Top game, but dodgy with a Voodoo3?



Nullsoft's amazing Winamp player has recently turned freeware. Get it.

It's about as secure as a pair of Christmas cracker handcuffs. That said, we reckon you've just been real unlucky with the forged message – we've been using ICQ for many years, and nobody has ever complained that we sent them anything weird or illegal. The second problem is spam. Look under Security Options for your Ignore List. Select the radio button so that it says: "Do not accept multiple recipient messages from people not on my contact list." That should block out most of the crap.

David Shenoda

A Open a folder or the Windows Explorer and view your songs in detail mode (View | Details) and note what description appears in the Type column. Now open the folder options screen (View | Folder Options). Click the File Types tab and scroll down the list until you find the description that appeared alongside your MP3 files. Select this and then hit the Remove button. Next

MP3 A GO-GO

Q I've recently got into MP3 music and have downloaded various different MP3 players. The

time you double-click on an MP3, you'll get a dialogue box asking you what program to use. Browse to *Winamp* and check the "Always use this program" option.

LEAPING RODENTS

Q Three months ago I bought a Logitech Mouseman with scroll wheel, thinking that at such a price it wouldn't have the same problems I've previously experienced. Alas, to my despair, it has. Instead of running smoothly around the screen, the ball inside seems to stop moving then suddenly jump right to the other side of the monitor. You can imagine the problems when playing games. It makes me want to smash the mouse with a large hammer. Do you know how to stop this happening? Please help before I end up with a flat mouse.

Ben

A First, check that the mouse ball isn't dirty. Remove it and clean it with soapy water if it is. Also, the little roller wheels inside collect all sorts of crap and can easily be cleaned with your fingernail when the ball's been taken out. Second, check that the mat isn't filthy, and make sure it's on the level. Third, a background application or even a virus or Trojan could be hogging the CPU time, so start Windows in Safe Mode and see if the same thing happens. If it works okay in Safe Mode, you need to take a long, hard look at what you've got running on your system in Normal Mode. Last, the mouse driver might be iffy. If you find the cursor does a mammoth leap across half the screen with hardly any hand movement, it's almost certainly the driver. Check the Customer Support section of the Logitech website at www.logitech.com/uk for updated software and in-depth technical help.

TWEAK IT

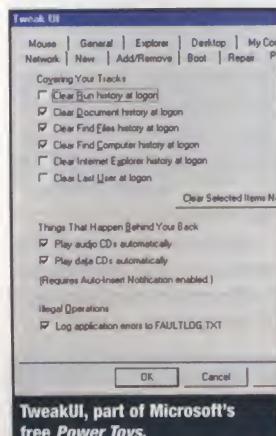
Q David Scott (Dear Wazza, PCZ#82) wants to know how to hide his Internet 'indiscretions'. In addition to your advice, there are various paranoia options within Microsoft's PowerToys package. These options can cover your tracks on many a level: part-time fetish researchers can hide their hobby from their mothers. Any mothers reading this, however, may find it instructive to browse through Temporary Internet Files in the

Windows folder.

Debbie_does_Fido.jpg is most definitely not a computer game.

Kieran Williams

A There are indeed many ways of being secretive. The one you mention, Microsoft's *Power Toys* package, is absolutely indispensable and available for free download from the Microsoft website at www.microsoft.com. Its *TweakUI* component allows you to automatically clear the computer's Run history, Document history, Find Files



TweakUI, part of Microsoft's free Power Toys.

history, Find Computer history, Internet Explorer history and even the Last User logon each and every time you switch on. Use it in combination with a tool like *Speed Disk* (part of the *Norton Utilities* package) and nobody will know what you've been up to. Although there is still the teeny problem of every web server you've ever visited having a detailed log of your precise movements...

BOARD TALK

Q As someone who was in the process of completely revamping the internal workings of his PC, I was extremely interested to see your article in PCZ#79 on the subject. So imagine my disappointment when I discovered that a significant portion of your advice was utter rubbish! Allow me to illustrate:

"To replace the [AT] motherboard and processor with Pentium II/III and Celeron or AMD K6-2/III combos necessitates an ATX-style motherboard – which in turn necessitates a new ATX-format case"

No it doesn't! I have now completed my upgrade, and for a tad over £200 now have an AMD K6-2 400 operating in my old AT-format case. How? By the simple expedient of buying a new motherboard with both AT and ATX power sockets. Overall the

article was a good one, and it helped calm my nerves before undertaking the task, but it is a shame that such a blatant and serious error was allowed to creep in. Other, less aware people may have read it and been convinced to go out and spend a lot of money on a new machine when they didn't really need to.

Mike Plunkett

A You are quite correct. But fear not, for the guilty parties will be taken outside and flogged with a cat-o'-nine-tails. To reiterate: yes, it is possible to get AT style motherboards that support the new high-speed Super Socket 7 processors K6-2 and K6-3. In simpler terms, you can keep your old chassis and power supply, although there's a high chance you'll have to upgrade to faster RAM chips. A Pentium II motherboard, on the other hand, will always be ATX, and so you'll always have to upgrade your case.

YOU CAN CALL ME AL

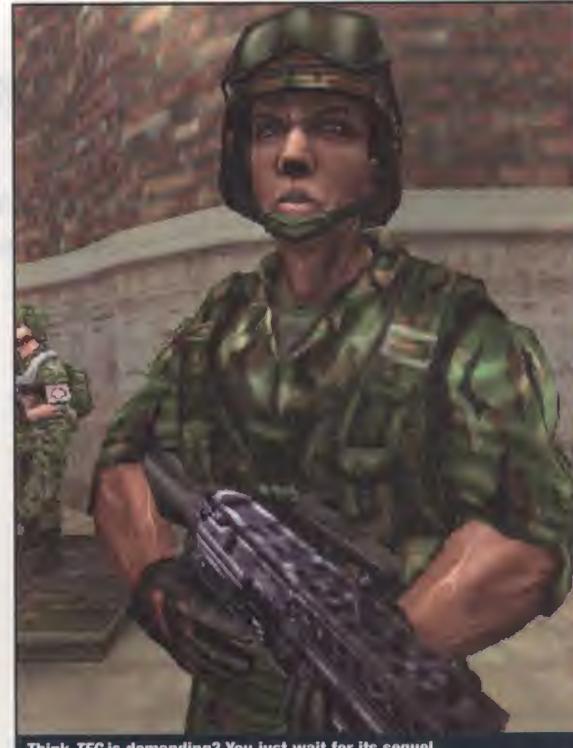
Q I am having trouble understanding your techie talk and I would like to know what a game's AL is.

Karen Cooper

A First off, it's not AL but AI – short for Artificial Intelligence. Any game that requires the computer to respond to your actions will have some form of AI. The better the AI is, the better your opponent will play – and the smarter he'll seem. For more details, check our *How to Understand PC Jargon* article in PCZ#80.

BALANCE OF POWER

Q I've been playing *Team Fortress Classic* on a P166 with a Voodoo card. I thought it was a fantastic game and that it ran really well on my machine. Recently I upgraded to a PIII and now I realise the difference your machine makes to how you play: sniping is now a cinch. *Half-Life* includes settings for different modem speeds, but what about settings for different system speeds? I wouldn't change my PIII back to the P166, but surely something can be done to balance the different classes across different machines, perhaps a system that monitors your frame-rate and adjusts your score accordingly? I realise you have to draw the line somewhere, but PCs vary so much that with



Think *TFC* is demanding? You just wait for its sequel...

multiplayer gaming taking off, people with lower spec machines will start to suffer.

'Colmag'

A Playing *TFC* on a lurching old mule with 32Mb of memory, chunky graphics and the raw processing power of a digital watch will of course affect your game. However, those of you working on limited funds



GO FASTER STRIPES

Q Here are a couple of hints to make using your PC a bit easier.

1. First, here's a great tip for speeding up downloads from the Internet. Point your browsers at sunsite.org.uk and you'll find UK mirrors of all the major FTP sites. Now you can get all your files at fantastic speeds because the server is located in London and not somewhere on the other side of the Atlantic.
2. No matter how much memory you have, Windows 95/98 still has the annoying habit of caching your hard drive. This has the effect of slowing everything down. To limit the amount of 'virtual' RAM in the cache, you need only add three lines to your SYSTEM.INI file located in the Windows directory.

[vcache]
minfilecache=16384
maxfilecache=16384

The above example is for a machine with 64Mb. It limits Windows to using 16Mb for disk caching – the simple rule being that you should need only a quarter of your total RAM for the disk cache. Restart Windows and you should notice a big improvement in the performance of your PC!

Gareth Lewis.

A Thank you for the tips, Gareth. Here's 50 quid for being such a helpful chap.



WATCHDOG

Your consumer gripes and complaints – **PC ZONE** takes them to the industry to pluck a solution straight from the horse's mouth. So to speak

ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

LIVING IN A WORLD OF HURT?

We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, write to Dear Wazza (page 154).

WRITE TO Watchdog, **PC ZONE**, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

LIVID AT LARA

Q A few months ago, I read a review of *Tomb Raider II: The Golden Mask*. The review said that it was a top quality add-on pack for *TR2*. Naturally, being the *Tomb Raider* addict that I am, I found some time in my 'busy' life to go to my local WH Smith and buy the add-on pack. To my horror, there were no add-on packs there! Well, that isn't strictly true – there were *Golden Mask* packs, but they were bundled with *TR2*.

A shop assistant told me that Core would not be selling *The*

Golden Mask by itself, which is a contradiction to what the review (not in your mag) said. I have searched around everywhere for the separate add-on as I own *TR2* already and don't want to buy it again.

I am very irritated by this and would like to know if you can buy *The Golden Mask* separately.

James Loach

A Fret not, James, here's what Susie Hamilton at Core Design had to say: "Golden Mask is not really an add-on pack – it's a collection of extra levels for the budget

edition of *Tomb Raider II*. You do need a copy of *Tomb Raider II* in order to be able to play these levels. We decided to create the extra *Golden Mask* levels to give our fans something extra, plus added value for money – *Tomb Raider II* alone retails for around £29.99. *Golden Mask* features the entire *Tomb Raider II* game plus five extra levels, all for only £14.99."

For those who have already purchased *Tomb Raider II*, Susie says that they have made all the *Golden Mask* levels

freely downloadable from Eidos web sites, Gamespot, Croft Times and so on. In the meantime, check out our cover CD for those extra levels, James. And relax.

TOTALLY HACKED OFF

Q After buying *Total Annihilation: Kingdoms* on the day of release, I thought I'd have a read of the manual on the train on the way home. Imagine my surprise when I found that the centre of the manual was in German transcript rather than English.

What's the problem, I hear you ask. The problem is that the middle of the manual is where all the different units are outlined – this makes the game a little difficult to play properly.

I sent a letter off to GTI requesting a new manual... no joy. So an e-mail went to them that was forwarded to Cavedog support who then, after numerous emails, pointed out that they can't send manuals to anywhere but North America. They then passed me back to GTI, who still haven't replied...

Gary Neville

A Piss poor service by the sound of it – we asked GTI what they had to say for themselves. "It's one of the down sides of having US-based development," the company explained. "The 'standard procedure' for queries relating to US-based products (as in the case of Cavedog's *TA Kingdoms*) is to try and pass it direct to the 'horse's mouth', so to speak. This generally proves brilliant for sorting out general and technical enquiries because if anyone knows the product inside and out, it's the developers themselves. However, this then proves ineffective if there's anything more than just information required – as in this case – so we can only apologise that the guy in question got bounced back to the UK."

GTI say your problem should have been sorted out by now

LAPTOP LAMENT

Yet another reader's tale of PC World woe, but with a happy ending. Maybe

Q Back in March '98, while in my first year of GCSEs, I bought a laptop. Unfortunately, I bought it from PC World, Northampton. After handing over £880, I was very happy for about three days. After which, the laptop died completely. PC World apologised, saying there was nothing they could do as it could not be repaired.

I whinged and they fitted me up with an inferior specced Olivetti. I whinged some more and they then agreed to upgrade the RAM by 8Mb. After four weeks, the RAM arrived and I went to get it. I saw my old laptop on the shelf for sale. I questioned the people at the desk but they didn't know anything. I asked for it back and they conceded. I was happy until Christmas '98, when the CMOS battery died. I was less happy when, about two months later, the screen, main battery and power switch all went funny.

It also took great pleasure in turning itself on and off whenever it felt like it. I sent the laptop back again, but when it came back, parts had been broken in transit, my new main battery did not work at all, the screen had a different set of faults, and the system had become horrendously slow.

They decided to abandon the whole thing and offered me a full refund. Foolishly, I declined – instead, I bought a brand spanking new Toshiba (£1,200) with a five year cover plan (£400). Seventeen days later, the whole system died. I asked PC World for a refund (they have a 14 day return policy) but alas, to no avail.

In fact, they denied the offer of a refund was ever made so, when the laptop came back, I used the machine as much as I could to get my money's worth. By now, though, the CD-ROM drive had come loose, the battery lasted for about an hour, *Word* crashed frequently, the 3D card didn't work at all, and I had to remaster it several times.

PC World had a look, gave me a new battery and, as compensation for all the trouble I'd had, decided to give me 64Mb RAM – which they didn't. I rang to ask why. "That was only if Mastercare [the people the service contract is with] had to be called. I think." I said that this had not been mentioned to me and they said: "We'll ring you back tomorrow."

That was about five weeks ago. Does this sound unreasonable to you?

Ed Beesley

PS: Update, 29 September: The computer is back at PC World – with the same fault. It's already been there for more than two weeks. I have had one phone call from them, asking for the job reference numbers. But that's it.

A A nightmare scenario from the sound of it, and one that doesn't cast PC World aka the Dixons Group, in a very favourable light. Off Watchdog went to ask the Dixons Group boids what on earth was going on. They replied: "The PC is currently in our store and, as we have explained to Mr Beesley, we have been discussing his case with the manufacturer directly."

Fortunately, PC World/Dixons Group have decided to make a gesture of good will: "We have agreed to replace his PC with a new and equivalent model and the store will contact Mr Beesley directly to arrange this exchange."

So with any luck, this laptop should last longer than your last one(s). In the meantime, PC World say they are "sorry that he has had these difficulties over the last 18 months. However, we hope that the offer of a replacement PC will resolve the matter to his satisfaction".

When the laptop came back, parts had been broken in transit, my new main battery did not work... and the system had become horrendously slow

ED BEESLEY HAS A SPOT OF LAPTOP BOTHER

and that they are furnishing you with a free copy of *Drakan* for your troubles...

JOYPAD PANTS?

Q After buying the excellent *X-wing Alliance*, I found that I needed a joypad to play it. I went to my local PC World, looking to buy a cheap one. I know a few people that work in PC World who have often warned me never to buy anything from there. I thought that they meant actual PC machines and I assumed that I'd be okay just buying a pad.

Anyway, a very helpful PC World assistant advised me that I should pay the extra money and buy a Microsoft Freestyle pad because you're able to tilt the pad when playing games like *X-Wing*. I got the pad and started playing *X-Wing* with it. Great, I thought, the Freestyle pad really adds a lot to the game – I was happy.

But three weeks later, I got round to installing *Tomb Raider 3* and found that using the Freestyle pad with the tilt sensor turned off was impossible. The directional pad appears to be slightly out of position and leans towards the right. As a result I found that the pad was over sensitive, ie pushing up often caused Lara to go up and left or up and right. Basically, I had no real control using the pad and *Tomb Raider* was unplayable.

I did try practising with it but I'd soon had enough – I was convinced that the problem was with the pad and not me. I decided to take it back to PC World and, after it was tested, I was told that there was nothing wrong with the pad and that the problem was with me and the way I was using it.

When I questioned him about this, he started to treat me like an idiot. He asked me if I knew what PC I've got, and if I'd installed the software. I told him my spec and that I had installed the software. He went on to say that there should have been a floppy disk with the pad and if I didn't have this floppy disk, I should phone up Microsoft and ask for one because this could be why the pad wouldn't work correctly.

After pointing out that the joypad box doesn't list a floppy disk, he finally admitted that the pad was over-sensitive but said that the fault was with Microsoft and the way they designed the pad. When I asked if I could swap it for a standard Microsoft pad, he said that PC World can't exchange products unless their technical



Midtown Madness: picky about CD-ROM drives.

support guy feels that the product is faulty. In my eyes at least, the pad appears to be faulty and PC World isn't taking responsibility for it – I can't believe that PC World is able to refuse to exchange a product when the product is faulty just by putting the blame on Microsoft.

Jim Martin

A Hmm... an intriguing dilemma. Off Watchdog went again to PC World/Dixons Group to ask them for their official take on the situation: "The store manager has confirmed that Mr Martin was sold a joypad which was, as he requested, the best for *X-Wing*, the game that he said he wanted to play," offered a spokesperson for the company, "as Mr Martin said in his letter, it 'really adds to the game – I was happy'. Although the joypad is working to its specification, it appears that it is overly sensitive for his style of play. Our manager has explained that there is nothing wrong with the joypad itself – it is simply a question of getting used to the way the pad operates on this game. However, as a gesture of goodwill, we have arranged for Mr Martin to exchange his joypad in-store."

I rang Microsoft Technical and they said: "It looks like the game doesn't like your CD-ROM – send it back to us and we'll give you a refund."

This seems strange as the game is fairly new – why do developers produce games that do not work properly with new hardware? It would also seem better for us both if Microsoft could release a patch for this product, rather than leave me without a bloody good game.

Kenneth Eckersall

A Bloody hell, not another game that ignores certain CD drives (see most past Watchdog columns for more details, folks).

Microsoft say that in fact it does have a patch to sort out your CD woes and apologise for any inconvenience caused. When we get our hands on it, we'll slap it on our cover CD for all and sundry, and forward the patch directly to you, Kenneth...

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

ULTIMA IX: ASCENSION & MESSIAH



The greatest role-playing series of all time reaches its conclusion with the final game in the third trilogy. Our world exclusive review will take you through every aspect of this hotly anticipated title. We'll also be casting our ever-critical eye over third-person actioner *Messiah*, where you play an angelic cherub out to thwart the Devil himself.

THE FINEST COVER CD DEMOS

Next month's CD promises to be even better than the one taped to the front of this issue. We will have the eagerly-awaited, oft-delayed *TA: Kingdoms* demo, *Quake III Arena* and – yes – *Daikatana*. *Half-Life: Opposing Force* and *Indiana Jones* are also on the way. And if that's not enough, how about *Interstate 82*, *Phoenix* and *Extreme Biker*.

HONEST REVIEWS

As well as our verdict on *Ultima IX: Ascension* and Shiny's *Messiah*, we should be rounding up all the big Christmas releases, including *Half-Life: Opposing Force*, *Theme Park World*, *Daikatana*, *Planescape Torment*, *Imperium Galactica 2*, *Wheel Of Time*, *Flight Simulator 2000*, *Interstate 82*, *Phoenix*, *Team Alligator*, *SU-27*, *Flanker 2.0* and *Diablo II*.

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

As they put the finishing touches to the second part of our *Tiberian Sun* walkthrough, the tips monkeys are already making their way through Relic's *Homeworld*: we'll have a complete solution next issue. Chief monkey Keith Pullin will be on hand with all the latest cheats, and we'll show you how to become the Barry Norman of the game world.

INSIGHTFUL PREVIEWS

One of the biggest games of next year, and the first from Peter Molyneux's Lionhead Studios, is *Black & White*. We'll be pulling the lid off the game and talking to the team behind it in the next issue. We'll also be performing a few Jedi mind tricks on LucasArts and finding out what's next from *Myth* developers Bungie.

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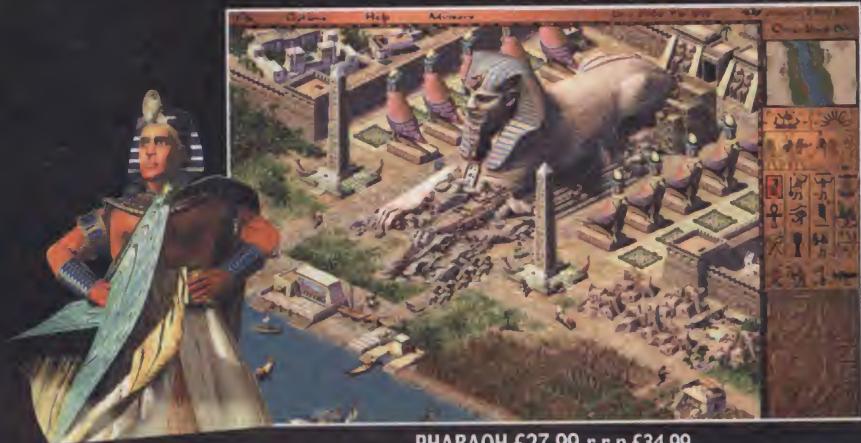
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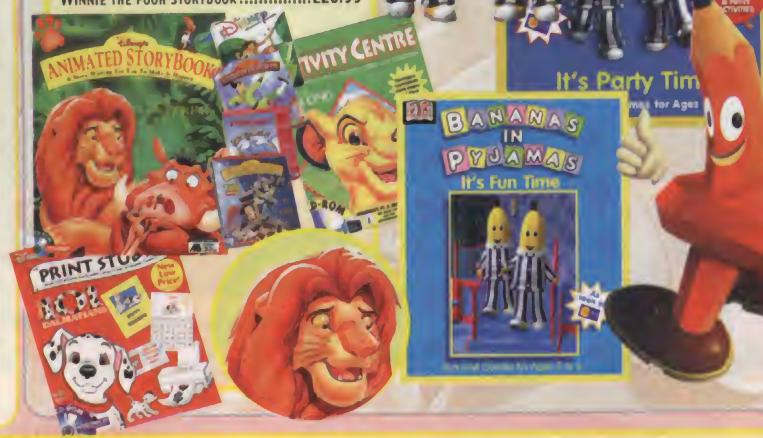
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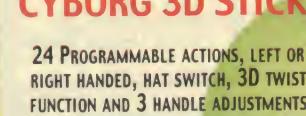
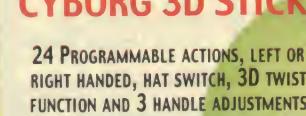
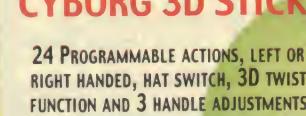
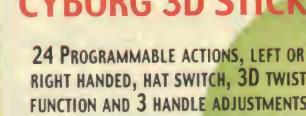
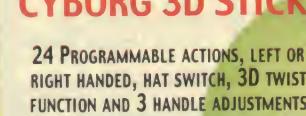
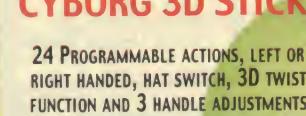
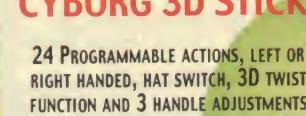
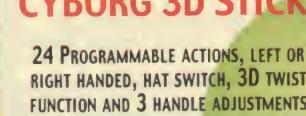
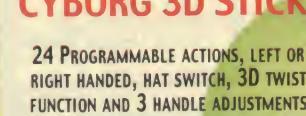
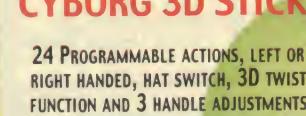
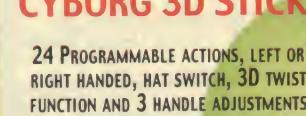
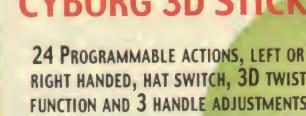
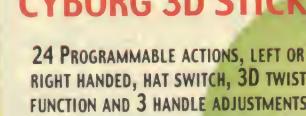
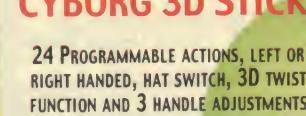
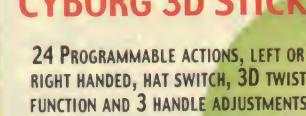
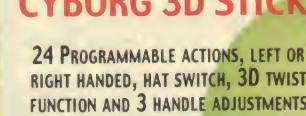
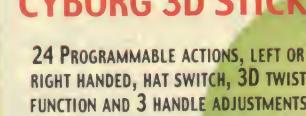
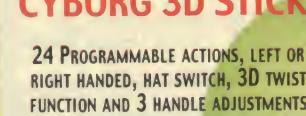
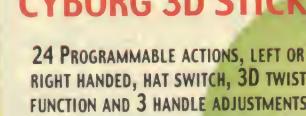
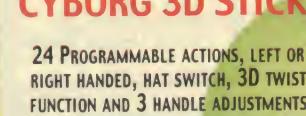
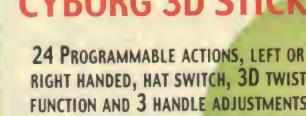
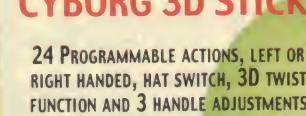
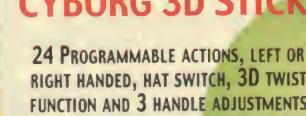
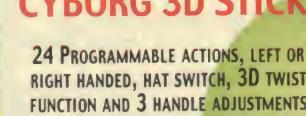
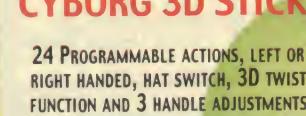
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that, in our expert
opinion, are the current
top PC games in their
field, as well as a few
extras you might like to
consider if you're a big
fan of the genre

ACTION GAMES



QUAKE II

★ The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "Quake II is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



HALF-LIFE

★ Regarded by many as the best game to grace any platform, *Half-Life* set a new standard by which all games are judged. The story development, atmosphere and player involvement have yet to be improved. If you buy one game from this Top 100, buy this one.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100



FORSAKEN

★ *Descent* is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.
PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000



WARGASM

★ Famed for their flight sims, DID finally deliver an action game only they could produce. With helicopters, APCs, and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank game could be – and it's even better to share.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199



SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

★ Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this 3D action game breathes fresh air into a stale genre. With great graphical effects and an involving storyline, it's perhaps just a bit too easy for the *Quake* hard-core.
PUBLISHER Micros soft • 00331 4601 5401



KINGPIN: LIFE OF CRIME

★ This controversial title should be talked about for its excellent gameplay and graphics rather than its violence and swearing. And the multiplayer aspect should prove fiery opposition to any other game out there.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



HIDDEN & DANGEROUS

★ Strategic shoot 'em ups don't get any harder, or more compelling, than this. Command a troop of men through WWII missions and avoid getting killed. If you're after the next step in *Rainbow Six*-style gaming, this is it.
PUBLISHER Take 2 Interactive • 01753 722900



JEDI KNIGHT / MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

★ As a double pack, this ageing 3D shooter and its expansion disc represents outstanding value for money. Dated graphics, but the level design is superb and the missions are some of the best ever made.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01895 456700



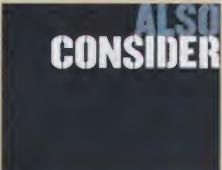
UNREAL TOURNAMENT

★ Played over a network or the Internet, *Unreal Tournament* is more than a match for *Quake II*'s multiplayer, with a combination of well designed maps and diverse gameplay. There may be no missions, but there's plenty to sink your teeth into.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

★ Lara's back in her fourth (and best) adventure so far. More moves, better looks, intricate puzzles and a well-developed plot. A well-rounded, winner or bust!
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

Eidos Interactive • PCZ #72 • 90%

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX

Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 89% **BUDGET**

PRIVATEER 2

Origin/EA • PCZ #44 • 94% **BUDGET**

QUAKE

Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% **BUDGET**

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

Fox Interactive • PCZ #77 • 91%

REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL

Ubi Soft • PCZ #50 • 89%

STARSIIEGE UNIVERSE

Sierra • PCZ #76 • 88%

SIN

Eidos Interactive • PCZ #70 • 91%

RACING GAMES



CARMAGEDDON II

PCZ #69 • 95%

It's that game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.

PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308



TOCA 2

PCZ #76 • 93%

Predictably, Codemasters have done it again. More cars, more tracks and the same stunning attention to detail make *TOCA 2* an essential purchase for petrol heads. Graphically it may not be a massive improvement, but gameplay-wise it most certainly is.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



COLIN MCRAE RALLY

PCZ #68 • 93%

Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MONACO GRAND PRIX

PCZ #69 • 92%

Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.

PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 081 944 9000



GRAND THEFT AUTO

PCZ #58 • 92%

This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.

PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011



NEED FOR SPEED III

PCZ #69 • 91%

Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *Need For Speed III*. Why? Because if avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



MOTOCROSS MADNESS

PCZ #67 • 91%

An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



MICRO MACHINES 3

PCZ #64 • 90%

The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MIDTOWN MADNESS

PCZ #79 • 90%

Drive around Chicago participating in races, annoying the police, or just cruising around. Not quite *Grand Theft Auto 3D*, but just as much fun, this should pull you through until *Driver* is ported from the PlayStation to the PC.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



BREAKNECK

PCZ #78 • 89%

Not only is this the fastest driving game out there, it also has enough options, tracks and vehicles to keep even occasional racers enthralled. Add to this the superb graphics, and you can see why *Breakneck* is a winner.

PUBLISHER THQ • 01483 767656

SPORTS GAMES



LINKS LS

PCZ #43 • 94%

The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF

PCZ #69 • 93%

Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. Without question, this is the best golf game yet.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97

PCZ #53 • 92%

This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.

PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



FIFA 99

PCZ #71 • 92%

Another biannual release from EA Sports that, as per usual, is better than the last. You'll have to think long and hard before shelling out another £40, but if you love footie it's well worth it for the best football game available for the PC.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SENSIBLE SOCCER
EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION

PCZ #69 • 90%

It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being as instantly playable as *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition*.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



VIRTUAL POOL 2

PCZ #58 • 90%

Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



THE GOLF PRO

PCZ #62 • 90%

If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links*, then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



ACTUA SOCCER 3

PCZ #72 • 89%

Although better than last year's effort, *Actua 3* fails to snatch the title from EA this time around. Mind you, with a good range of options and a huge range of teams to play against, this certainly has a longer shelf life than *FIFA*.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



NHL 2000

PCZ #83 • 87%

EA's ice hockey series has improved graphics and AI, fast-paced addictive gameplay and can now graft your digitised face onto a player, then watch it beaten with a stick to a bloody pulp. Now that's family entertainment.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



NBA LIVE 99

PCZ #73 • 87%

Being an EA Sports title, *NBA Live 99* is, unsurprisingly, the best game in its field. If you're a Sprite-drinking hoop fan, there's plenty here to justify shelling out for the annual upgrade. If you're not, you'll neither know nor care.

PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



ALSO CONSIDER
There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...

JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%

MADDEN 2000 EA Sports • PCZ #83 • 80%

TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%

BRIAN LARA CRICKET Codemasters • PCZ #75 • 85%

FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 MicroProse • PCZ #36 • 95%

SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**

DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psygnosis • PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET**

MOTORHEAD Gremlin Interactive • PCZ #63 • 90%

TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Europress • PCZ #59 • 86% **BUDGET**

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS Sierra • PCZ #69 • 90%

ADVENTURE GAMES



BIOFORCE

• Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *A/I* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



SYSTEM SHOCK

• This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS

• Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255



LBA 2: TWINSTEN'S ODYSSEY

• Twinsten is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



SAM & MAX

• The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255



DISCWORLD NOIR

• Although the adventure genre is almost dead, *Discworld Noir* is very much alive, throwing plot and gameplay surprises at you. Playing a washed-up private eye, you clear your name, find rare artifacts and get the girl.

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



RESIDENT EVIL II

• Not quite as attractive as it could have been, *Resident Evil II* remains one of the most tensely gripping adventure games of recent years. A modicum of simple puzzles, offset by liberal and gratuitous gore make for top entertainment. Be afraid. Be very afraid.

PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255



MONKEY ISLAND ADVENTURE PACK

• *Monkey Island 1* and *2* are perhaps the finest point-and-clickers ever to grace the PC. The third outing may have been disappointing, but it would be a sin to exclude it from this excellent triple pack.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/Activision • 01985 4567000



GRIM FANDANGO

• LucasArts not only do the best adventure games, but have also recently been doing the only adventure games worth buying. This latest has style written all over it, and hopefully signals a rosy future for fans of the genre.

PUBLISHER LucasArts • 0171 368 2255



KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY

• To mark the genre's transition from point-and-click to a full 3D interface, Sierra's eighth *King's Quest* adventure proves an engaging stopgap, even if it is a little too Americanised. Good but not great.

PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

FULL THROTTLE Virgin • PCZ #27 • 92% **BUDGET**

THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE Virgin • PCZ #43 • 92%

REDGUARD Virgin • PCZ #75 • 89%

GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN Cendant • PCZ #36 • 88%

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE Electronic Arts • PCZ #21 • 93% **BUDGET**

DISCWORLD II GT Psynopsis • PCZ #44 • 93% **BUDGET**

ALSO CONSIDER

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



SYSTEM SHOCK 2

• One of the most compelling gaming experiences to hit the PC, *System Shock 2* mixes heavy RPG and 3D action with adventure elements. In short, a title that's absolutely indispensable for any self-respecting gamer.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FINAL FANTASY VII

• Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



REALMS OF THE HAUNTING

• Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap. *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.

PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



ONLINE ONLY ULTIMA ONLINE

• In many ways an old-school RPG, but with amazing freedom, depth and open-endedness. So addictive that *ZONE* editor Chris has sold his car, his house and his soul to finance a permanent Web connection.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



LANDS OF LORE III

• Westwood know how to tell a good story, and this latest in the series is the best of the lot. Combine that with ease of use and some highly polished artwork, and you'll find *LOL III* a great alternative to more traditional RPG efforts.

PUBLISHER Westwood/EA • 01753 549442



ULTIMA VII

• Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



DIABLO

• Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.

PUBLISHER Zablic/Blizzard • 01626 332233



FALLOUT 2

• Does exactly what it says on the tin. Twice as big as the original, but utilising the exact same engine. If you like the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper.

PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



BALDUR'S GATE

• With every developer 'going 3D' these days, it's refreshing to find an old-school RPG that combines traditional D&D role-playing with sumptuous 2D graphics. *Baldur's Gate* is intelligent and involving in equal measures.

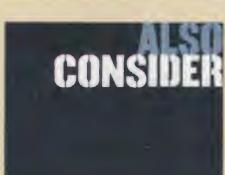
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



ONLINE ONLY EVERQUEST

• If you find *Ultima Online* too vast, *EverQuest* may be the online RPG for you. It's far more combat-orientated than *Ultima*, with captivating monsters and loads of visual candy. Its graphics are 3D, but the gameplay is a bit linear.

PUBLISHER Sony (sold at Electronic Boutique only • 0171 637 7911)



• These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat in the past couple of years. But there's also... *ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS*
Origin/EA • PCZ #1 • 94%
TERRIS AOL • PCZ #44 • 88%
DIABLO: HELLFIRE Cendant • PCZ #59 • 82%
ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%
RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET Mindscape • PCZ #25 • 78%

STRATEGY GAMES



HOMeworld

★ *Homeworld* delivers the dream of millions of PC strategists the world over: a fully three-dimensional strategic experience. The vast expanse of space is the battleground, the hundreds of ships at your command the weapon, and the limits are those of your own imagination.

PCZ #82 • 94%



DUNGEON KEEPER 2

★ *Dungeon Keeper* was a great idea. *DK2* takes the essence of the original game, corrects all the mistakes, vastly improves the graphics, and doses the myriad of features with a wise hand. And it keeps us very happy indeed.

PCZ #79 • 94%

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

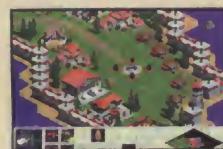


TA: KINGDOMS

★ *TA* puts on a pointy hat and grows a six-foot beard for this long-awaited sequel. Don't be put off by the fantasy setting, this is a real strategy masterpiece. From the gorgeous animation to the AI, *Kingdoms* exudes class.

PCZ #78 • 94%

PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



AGE OF EMPIRES

★ Imagine *Civilization II*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.

PCZ #54 • 94%

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 3

★ No fancy graphics, no sound and no online multiplayer options do nothing to hide the fact that *Champ Manager 3* is one of the most addictive games you'll ever play. Forty quid for a season ticket to nirvana? Bloody bargain, mate.

PCZ #73 • 93%

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

★ The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.

PCZ #70 • 92%

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



MAGIC & MAYHEM

★ Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Myths deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.

PCZ #70 • 92%

PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255



SIMCITY 3000

★ Ten years on, *SimCity* remains as addictive as it ever was. Little was broken, and little was fixed. With new buildings to try out and an enhanced transport system, *SimCity 3000* is a must for old-timers and newbies alike.

PCZ #74 • 92%

PUBLISHER Maxis/EA • 01753 549442



SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI

★ *Civilization II* was, and still is, one of the greatest strategy games ever made, and *Alpha Centauri* is everything a true sequel should be. Rather than create another remake, Sid Meier has created the game *Civ* fans have been crying out for for years.

PCZ #74 • 92%

PUBLISHER Firaxis/EA • 01753 549442



C&C: TIBERIAN SUN

★ Perhaps not as stunning as one might have hoped after a three-year wait, *Tiberian Sun* is nevertheless a truly great game. Pushing the *Command & Conquer* genre to its limits, it offers PC strategists immense depth, detail and variety.

PCZ #81 • 90%

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%

BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION MicroProse • PCZ #78 • 89%

COMMANDOS Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%

WARZONE 2100 Eidos Interactive • PCZ #75 • 90%

X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE MicroProse • PCZ #52 • 95% **BUDGET**

CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER Activision • PCZ #75 • 89%

CAESAR III Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%

TOTAL ANNIHILATION GT Interactive • PCZ #56 • 92% **BUDGET**ALSO
CONSIDER

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES



FALCON 4.0

PCZ #72 • 95%

★ After waiting literally years for this, the wait was worth it. With 3D-accelerated graphics and a dynamic campaign structure, *Falcon 4.0* can fly against the best of them – and win. One of the best flight sims ever seen.

PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893



F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

PCZ #68 • 95%

★ This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.

PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



FLIGHT SIM 98

PCZ #55 • 94%

★ Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.

PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



APACHE HAVOC

PCZ #73 • 94%

★ Of the three main chopper sims available, *Longbow 2* is the one if you're a hard-core sim head, *Team Apache* is the choice for fans whose preference swings the other way, and *Apache Havoc* straddles the gap. And the graphics are to die for.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



LONGBOW 2

PCZ #59 • 92%

★ "Longbow 2 is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



JANE'S F-15

PCZ #64 • 92%

★ A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLYING CORPS GOLD

PCZ #59 • 92%

★ Action-packed WW1 flight simulation with neat graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WW1 flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WW1 sim currently available.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



FLIGHT UNLIMITED III

PCZ #82 • 90%

★ For all those who enjoy the experience of flying for its own sake rather than an excuse for blasting other flying things to bits, this is (along with the *Flight Sim* series) an object of worship and devotion. It deserves high praise.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS

PCZ #72 • 90%

★ It's been a fierce dogfight to see who rules the WWII flight sim skies. *Jane's* combines realism with accessibility and ease, and although the game doesn't have a dynamic campaign feature its graphics make it a clear winner.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



MIG ALLEY

PCZ #80 • 90%

★ *Mig Alley* gives hardcore flight simmers' piloting skills a run for their money, but don't be put off. If you're willing to put in the work, it will repay you with excellent in-flight graphics and brilliant mission planning elements.

PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



★ If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – *Total Air War* being a case in point. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...

F/A 18E SUPER HORNET Titus Software • PCZ #83 • 88%*A-10 CUBA!* Activision • PCZ #59 • 90%*F-16 AGGRESSOR* Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%*COMANCHE GOLD* NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%*F/A-18 KOREA* Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

ON THE CD

WORDS Craig Vaughan DISCMEISTER Daniel Emery

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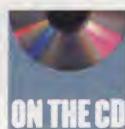
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- If possible, have your PC operating and near the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM and so on – plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call so you can jot down the relevant info.

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- You need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.

The 3D graphics are mightily impressive.



DEMOS + SHAREWARE

ULTIMA IX: ASCENSION

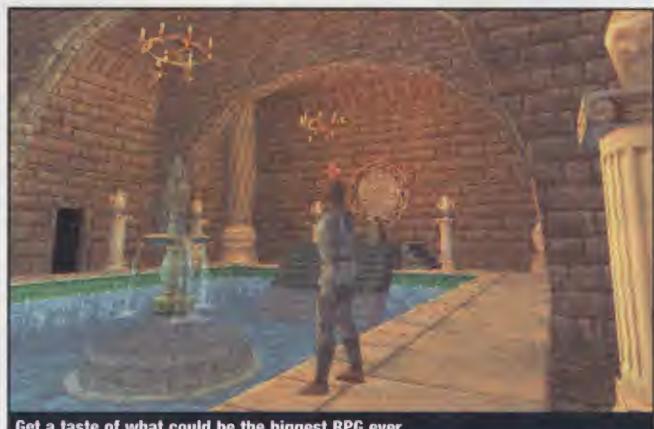
Electronic Arts

The *Ultima* phenomenon of seminal role-playing games began way back in 1980 and has spawned as many sequels as your average *Star Trek* franchise. Currently enjoying a renaissance in the form of *Ultima Online*, the game's creator, Richard Garriott, is now putting the finishing touches to what could be the biggest-selling game of all time – the ninth in the series. Set initially on Earth, our hero Avatar must try and prevent the destruction of the land of Britannia, which is being torn apart by The Evil Guardian. Having surrendered to the ongoing march of 3D technology, the full game offers beautifully depicted environments and an unprecedented level of character interaction with hundreds of NPCs. It boasts dozens of unique environments, magic and combat skill advancements, spells, weapons, fearsome creatures to battle, and of course detailed worlds and plots to explore. This demo gives a taste of the game's opening scenes and allows exploration of your homely surroundings.

Controls: Keyboard/mouse

ARROWS Move forwards/backwards, left/right

LMOUSE 'use' items





The map generator adds infinite variety to the game.

AGE OF EMPIRES 2: THE AGE OF KINGS

Microsoft

Now over two years old, the original *Age of Empires* has proven to have a never-ending shelf life. Even today it remains one of the finest examples of real-time strategy available for the PC. This sequel looks to improve on the original by offering a more balanced mix of strategic action and *Civilization*-style empire management. Set in the era that saw the collapse of the Roman Empire, the task at hand requires evolving a civilisation fit to survive the ravages of time. With advanced AI and a plethora of major gameplay enhancements, this sequel looks set to be the standard that all others will have to follow. The full game offers startlingly new detailed graphics,

13 diverse civilisations to nurture, a massive technology tree and far more comprehensive single-player campaign modes with the thread of a cohesive story running throughout. This massive demo highlights those improvements as well as offering a gentle tutorial for those unfamiliar with the style of gameplay on offer. As well as 'The William Wallace learning campaign', Microsoft have cannily included a sample random single-player map and a separate arena, which allows multiplayer gaming via the MSN gaming zone.

Controls: Mouse



Click a villager to gather wood from this tree.

Back in the dark ages, literally.



Giles liked to have a good hop while taking aim.

PCZONE
EXCLUSIVE

HALF-LIFE: REDEMPTION

Maverick Development

Everybody loves *Half-Life*, but by now you'll have finished it and are no doubt bogged down in the thousands of unoriginal and poorly designed maps littering the Internet. Step in PC ZONE to save the day – we've teamed up with fledgling codeshop Maverick Development to bring you a new *Half-Life* story. This massive self-contained add-on offers four new episodes across numerous cunningly designed and beautifully crafted levels. Starring again as the ever-reluctant hero Gordon Freeman, your new quest involves attempting to recover three lost artefacts belonging to the alien Xen race. Obviously, the future of the universe is at stake, and there's a host of new enemies and traps designed to thwart your quest. Although only released within the last month on the Internet, this add-on has caused a massive international stir, and looks set to propel the

Maverick team into the realms of commercial games development. For the very latest updates and tips on this amazing project point your browser to www.maverickdev.com/redeem.htm

So, how does it work? Well, you'll obviously need the original *Half-Life* game installed and patched to v1.13. Simply unzip the add-on from the editorial menu on the CD and treat it in the same way that you would treat any other map or custom game, by placing the folder in the root of your *Half-Life* game directory. Load the original game in the normal way and select 'custom game' from the menu and prepare yourself for days of gaming heaven. Because the game uses the original *Half-Life*, the keys are completely re-definable from the main menu. Enjoy – it doesn't get better than this. You lot are spoilt. Fact.



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The beautiful blonde and the cunning stunt.

TRICKSTYLE

Acclaim

Although it borrows heavily from other mainstream racing games and winter sports simulations, *TrickStyle* could, in itself, be described as both unique and original. Based a few years in the future, it's best described as a hoverboard racing simulation (think of the motorised skateboarding scene from *Back To The Future 2*, and you'll know where we're coming from). The full game offers numerous diverse racing environments and a series of wacky manga-type combatants. Speed freaks won't take long to realise that cunning stunts are the best way to progress, rewarding you as they do with bonus points and short cuts to the chequered flag. This feature packed demo offers a stunt-ridden practice arena and the opportunity for a slice of racing action, too.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

UP ARROW Accelerate

LEFT ARROW Left

RIGHT ARROW Right

Z Ollie

X Luge

A Spin

S Drill

LSHIFT Stall

LCONTROL Tight Turn

ESC Menu



And wow you get to wear those groovy clothes.



The grunts have a meeting to decide what to blow up next.

Be sure to search well for hidden traps and weapons.

Just because you close your eyes, doesn't mean they can't see you!

SPEC OPS 2: US ARMY GREEN BERET

Take Two Interactive

It doesn't seem too long ago that team-based strategy-combat games were merely a twinkle in some game developer's eye. Now here we are with a flood of them competing for the same market share. This sequel to *Spec Ops: Ranger Assault* is set firmly in the *Hidden & Dangerous* mould and places you in control of a four-man Green Beret assault squad. This one-mission demo puts you in strategic command of a 'search and recover' sortie set deep behind enemy lines. To emerge victorious you'll need to avoid civilian casualties while ambushing numerous enemy positions. By rushing the trucks before they leave the dockside bound for some unstable foreign power, you'll recover the stolen stinger missiles and save the free world.

Controls: Keyboard/Mouse

F1 Squad forward

F2 Troops to follow you

F3 Troops to keep their positions

F4 Troops to hit the dirt

F5 Third-person view

F6 First-person view

F7 Night vision

F9 Scope and infra-red scope

F10 Map mode

F11 Pointer on/off

F12 Drop camera

NUMPAD Movement

+/- zoom in/out in third-person view only



"Come on Alastair, now's not the time to play silly buggers."

EDITORIAL

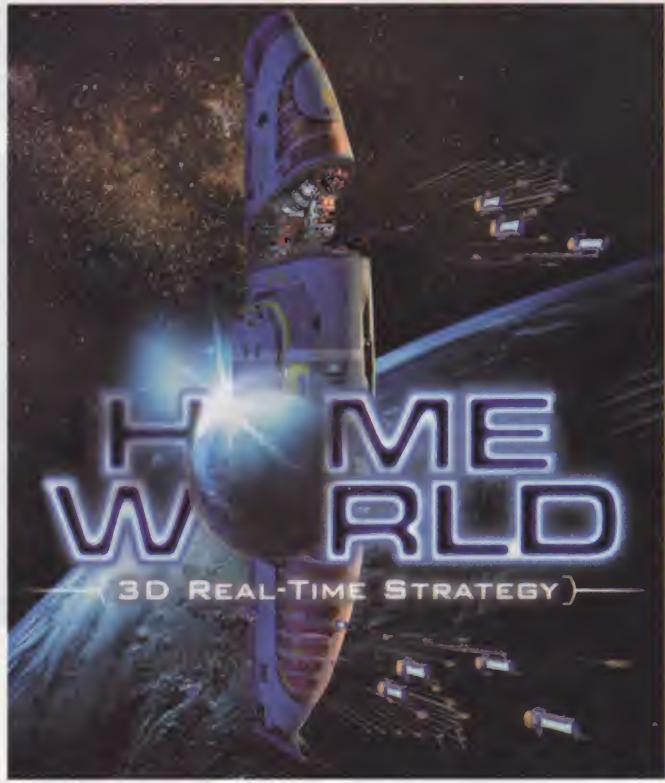
ON THE CD This is where we've cleverly hidden our devastatingly brilliant *Half-Life: Redemption* add-on pack. You didn't really think we'd forgotten to put it on the disc, did you?

PATCHES

ON THE CD Get the best from your games with the latest collection of updates and bug fixes. See our CD browser for explanations of what they do.

CIVILIZATION II: TEST OF TIME V1.1**COMMAND & CONQUER: TIBERIAN SUN****V1.13 PATCH****DESCENT 3 V1.2.0****DRAKAN PATCH****FLY! V1.01.77****FREESPACE 2 V1.01****HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC III V1.2****HIDDEN & DANGEROUS V1.2****HOMeworld V1.03****JANE'S FLEET COMMAND V1.1****KINGPIN V1.21****MECHCOMMANDER GOLD****SHADOW MAN PATCH****STARCRAFT V1.06****STARCRAFT: BROTHERHOOD OF BLADES V1.06B****STARSHIP TROOPERS: TRIBES V1.9****SW: PHANTOM MENACE V1.1****X: BEYOND THE FRONTIER V1.9B****(ENGLISH)****SYSTEM SHOCK 2 PATCH****TOTAL ANNIHILATION: KINGDOMS V2.0**

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HOMeworld

Sierra

Homeworld defies the usual attempt at 'one genre pigeon-holing' and offers an immersive blend of strategy, resource management, combat and war gaming, all in beautiful 3D. It also sports beautiful graphics and an intuitive control system. Try it, we rather think you'll like it. This demo offers a gentle introduction and some diverse training missions.

Controls: Keyboard/mouse

L Launch manager
Tilde Cancel order
K Kamikaze
Home Mothership
Caps Tactical overlay
Z Ship special
S Scuttle

[Previous tactic

] Next tactic

M Move

H Harvest

R Research manager

F Focus

D Dock

Tab Next formation

When two tribes
go to war...

AGE OF WONDERS

Take Two Interactive

The demo of this turn-based god game will have role-playing strategists champing at the bit for more. The full game offers a story-driven single-player campaign mode, featuring 12 playable races, a huge sprawling map and an intuitive scenario creator. It comes with a massive tutorial and an engrossing single-player campaign that can be played from a number of differing tactical perspectives, meaning the demo alone should keep you at it for ages.

Controls: Keyboard/mouse

ARROWS Scroll the map

PGUP Map level up

PGDN Map level down

N or , Select next unit/army

P or , Select previous unit/army

H Select next Hero

L Select leader

D Select party as 'Done' for the current turn

G Guard On/Off

C Center on selected unit/army

CTRL + ENTER End Turn

F2 or CTRL + O Open/Load game

F3 or CTRL + S Save game

M Move unit

O Observe enemy movement

SHIFT Hold and click for group command

ALT + ENTER Switches between view modes

ESC Quits from most screens

F1 Recalls last tip in the Tutorial

EXTENDED PLAY

ON THE CD Push your favourite games into virgin territory with these odds and sods (see 'Extended Play' on page 180)

We freely admit we've got a soft spot for Bullfrog in general and the marvellous *Dungeon Keeper 2* in particular. So, if you've explored everything the game has to offer you'll be gagging for the three bonus packs on offer here. Also, we've thrown in the latest patches and enhancements to bring the game up to version 1.51. If that's not enough, we've added loads of new multiplayer maps, a map generator and a *Dungeon* editor. Now, for goodness sake, go away and leave us alone.



Dungeon Keeper 2: we've got more additions than a mad maths professor.



Sinister developments on the very fringes of known space.

TACHYON: THE FRINGE

Novalogic

Sell your soul as a mercenary for hire, in this 3D space combat sim. The enormous demo contains no less than five full missions, including diplomatic sorties, escort duties, target and manoeuvring practice and all-out combat. Very much in the style of *Privateer: The Darkening*, this game looks set for big things – see for yourself.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

Esc Exit game

G Game options

O Toggle objective display

? Display keylist

ARROWS Up/down, left/right

TAB Afterburners

BACKSPACE Full throttle

0 Zero throttle

M Match speed of target

+/ - Increase/Decrease throttle

Z Hold down to fly backwards

INS Hold to slide

, Roll left

. Roll right

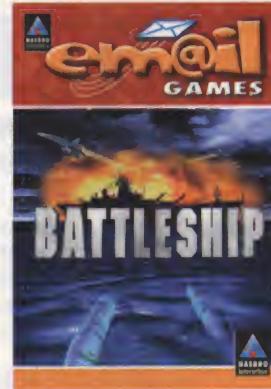
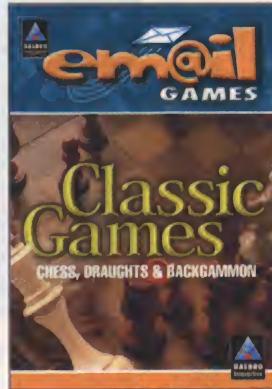
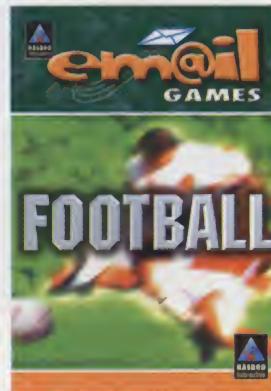
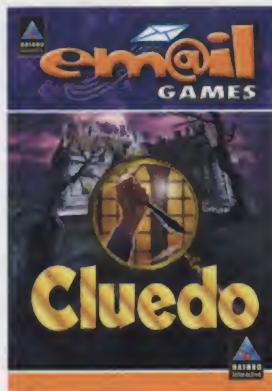
1 Change weapon 1

2 Change weapon 2

SPACEBAR Fire weapon

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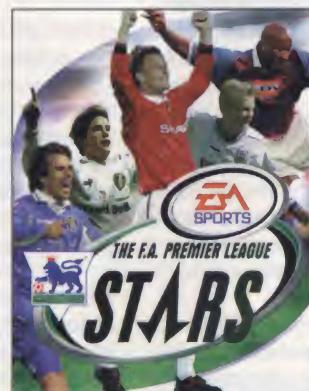
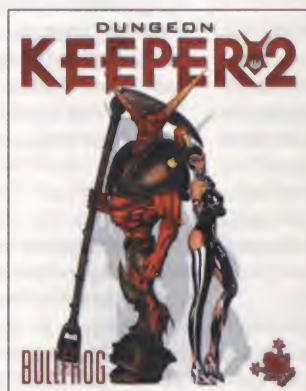
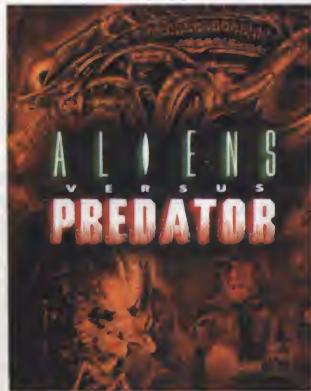
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while stocks last



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Applies to stickered items only while stocks last.

EXTENDED PLAY



Spank my imp up – it's a *Dungeon Keeper II* special feature. This month's cover CD is packed to the gunnels with new maps, mapping tools, program upgrades and some tasty Bullfrog freebies

WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF

ON THE CD On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages, starting on page 154.

DUNGEON KEEPER II

• 50 new files to put a smile back on any *Dungeon Keeper*'s face

OFFICIAL BULLFROG UPDATES

• DK2 UPDATE TO v1.51 FROM v1.50

(DK2Update150to151_English.exe) Official release upgrading an existing *DK2* v1.50 to v1.51. See the Official *Dungeon Keeper* website for full details.

• DK2 UPDATE TO v1.51 FROM v1.50

(DungeonKeeper2Update.exe) Official release upgrading the release version to *DK2* v1.50. See the Official *Dungeon Keeper* website for full details.

OFFICIAL BULLFROG BONUS PACKS

• DK2 Bonus Pack 1

(DK2BonusPack1.exe) Bullfrog's Official *Dungeon Keeper II* Bonus Pack, part one. Includes a great new four-player level called Olympia which can be used either in skirmish or multiplayer mode. Double-click on the installer to get started; next time you fire up *DK2* you'll see the map.

• DK2 Bonus Pack 2

(DK2BonusPack2.exe) Bullfrog's Official *Dungeon Keeper II* Bonus Pack, part two. Includes a new skirmish level called Trap Time, which flings both heroes and keepers at you. Double-click on the installer to get started; next time you fire up *DK2* you'll see the map.

• DK2 Bonus Pack 3

(DK2BonusPack3.exe) Bullfrog's Official *Dungeon Keeper II* Bonus Pack, part three. Includes a great new two-player level where you must rescue the Mistress in order to win the game. The map can be used either in skirmish or multiplayer mode. Double-click on the installer to get started; next time you fire up *DK2* you'll see the map.

HOMEBREW DUNGEONS

• 1 ON 1 (1on1.zip)

Suitable for two players, 1 On 1 is a long, slightly skinny map with an ornate room in the centre of the arena. Gain access to the secret doors to the north and to the south of the central chamber and you should gain the upper hand.

• AGONY (agony.zip)

Agony is home to four keepers. A liberal dose of precious metal means most players should tool themselves up fairly quickly.

• ANTWERP (Antwerp.zip)

A port in Belgium on the Scheldt river, *Antwerp* is also a two-player map that puts you up against some seriously beefy heroes before locking horns with your neighbouring keeper to unlock the level's stash of gemstones.

• BATTLES (battles.zip)

Recommended for either skirmish or multiplayer, *Battles* is a two-

player map created with the *DK2* Random Map Generator (see elsewhere on this page). Boasts the usual array of gold, gems, portals, other keepers and lots of brawling between creatures.

• CASTLE MIDAS

(CastleMidas.zip) As one might expect, *Castle Midas* features a castle brimming over with the old gold stuff. Be the first keeper to reach the riches and you should be home and dry.

• DIAMOND FIRE

(diamondfire.zip) Suitable for up to four players (although two feels a bit 'empty' once you've had the luxury of more), *Diamond Fire* features a neutral barracks in the centre with guardians aplenty, including ten high level heroes and countless cannons. In fact, it plays more like *Red Alert* than *Dungeon Keeper*. Recommended for hooligans.

• DOCLAND EPISODE ONE

(DocLand1.zip) A two-player map suitable for both skirmish and multiplayer modes of play. Check the readme file for full details; the author includes a list of preferred *DK2* settings and options to help you get the most out of this dungeon.

• DRAKON (Drakon.zip)

Another map for two players and jolly good fun in either skirmish or multiplayer. Has plenty of precious metal, although it's all 'locked away' behind nasty wizards. So you'll need some serious hacking and slashing before you can get at any of it...

• FACE OFF (FaceOff.ZIP)

A medium-sized dungeon with a seemingly impossible number of

EXTENDED PLAY BOOKMARKS

Dungeon Keeper Official Site www.dungeonekeeper.com

The Keeper dk2.ea-europe.com/uk

Biohazard DK2 Zone www.bhzone.com/dk2

Thrakath's Corner www.dkeeper2.net/thrakaths

Dark Stratagem www.dkeeper2.net/strategy

top-level heroes protecting the central area of gemstones. Heaps of gold allows you to build a formidable army, though, so bide your time before heading off for the jewels. Three portals liven things up somewhat.

• FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL

(fightforsurvival.zip) Up to four players start in opposite corners of the map, with a central lava island separating them all. Lots of gold, lots of heroes, no secrets to speak of.

• FIRE AND WATER

(fireandwater.zip) You guessed it – a dungeon comprising of both fire and water. Islands allow you to hop across, and generous chunks of gold keep your cash reserves topped up for all that bridge building.

• FREDMAP

(Fredmap.zip) Two players take it in turns to avoid a plague of hero vampires (if you keep getting bitten, the author suggests you convert hero monks to help you). Use the four portals to gain entry to the strongholds, tap into the gem reserves, and kick the other guy's arse out of the dungeon.

• GEMSTON

(gemston.zip) The author admits that keepers are heavily favoured with all manner of gold, creatures and portals. Wasn't the toughest

challenge, but quite fun to lord it over a surplus of resources.

• GOLD RUSH

(GoldRush.zip) Two players drown under a massive excess of gold. Only trouble is, there's no room to make the dungeon. Take time to uncover the secret, gain access to the third portal and win the day.

• THE GREAT DIVIDE

(GreatDivide.zip) Yet another map with an over-abundance of hard cash. The divide itself is a Berlin Wall-like structure separating the two keepers, although there are numerous portals to help you get around quickly. And don't forget the neutral area towards the south of the dungeon...

• HERO SCENARIOS

(Heroes.zip) Contains a total of three separate hero scenarios, *Heroes At War*, *Hero Apocalypse* and *Hero Apocalypse Single Player*. Compiled by the author of the most popular *Dungeon Keeper* mapping software, the three levels test you and the processing power of your machine.

• HOT CROSS

(hotcross.zip) Between two and four players are separated by impenetrable rock. Gemstone areas are surrounded by pools of lava. To get at your opponents or the money, you'll need to go via the centre. The

Getting ready to see off another hopeful hero.



Torturing a skeleton. If only it had a nervous system...



I'd give up the eclairs if I were you, mate.





Real life or make believe, a femme fatale always has a nice arse.



240 volts of bondage frenzy.

author notes that he's only tested it in skirmish mode; feel free to try multiplayer, but don't blame us if your PC blows up and sets fire to the curtains.

★ HOT HEART (Hotheart.zip)

Ideal for four players in either skirmish or multiplayer, *Hot Heart* plays well. There's a single route into the other dungeon area, where you'll find gems galore. As with so many levels, the key to supremacy is control of the central area.

★ HOT LAVA (HOTLAVA.zip)

Guess what? Yup – that's right, hods of hot lava for two players to go swimming in. Plenty of neutral creatures to keep you on your toes.

★ HOURGLASS (Hourglass.zip)

A neat, two-player map with small passages to the east and west. Healthy amounts of gold and three gem seams each allow you to build up a sizeable army before charging in for a big battle in the central arena.

★ KORNOGRAPHY

(kornography.zip)

Excellent deathmatch level for two players. Not suited to skirmish play, as it makes the automated opponents play like Westwood programmed them.

★ LADDER (ladder.zip)

A rather sparse four-player map in the rough shape of a ladder. Lorry loads of gold and jewels mean you'll be throwing creatures around from dawn until dusk.

★ LAVA ISLES (ladder.zip)

A four-player map of interconnected islands with players starting out in each corner. The only way across is via the centre, making it perfect for ambushes and traps. Reminiscent of the old *Total Annihilation* favourite called *Lava Highground*.

★ MULTIPLAYER MAPS

(maps.zip)

Features two four-player maps, Stronghold and Dungeon Hack. The former sees you starting very

close to your opponents; the latter is far larger and has a number of neutral creatures roaming free.

★ MIGHTY (mighty.zip)

Defeat evil princes, restore the monarchy and generally perform extremely un-keeper like deeds. Save the king from imprisonment and all his servants will instantly rally under your command.

★ NO WEENIES (Noweenies.zip)

A massive, wandering level filled with no fewer than 300 heroes and their faithful creatures. And just in case that isn't enough of a challenge, these heroes have thoughtfully set over 100 traps. If you can deal with that, you'll move onto the small matter of the other keepers. Recommended – if you're mental.

★ THE POND (pond.zip)

A two-player skirmish map featuring a gem rich central area surrounded by water. There are several chunks of gold, but the dungeon's demands are such that you'll be heading for the gems sooner than you think.

★ QUADRAXUS (Quadraxus.zip)

Quadraxus is a top four player map with the resources locked in the grasp of a powerful hero. The author suggests playing in skirmish and choosing at least one Greyman.

★ RIVER (river.zip)

Two players fight for supremacy on a skirmish map dominated by a large river. As with *Hot Cross* (above), the author hasn't tested multiplayer mode.

★ ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

(RockHard.zip)

As the name suggests, three players find themselves trapped between a rock and a hard place. The first keeper has location on his side, the second is surrounded by impenetrable rock, and the third has next to no breathing space.

★ SIMPLY AMAZING

(simpamaz.zip)

A rudimentary four-player map,

designed for skirmish play, but also plays multiplayer. Features a splash of lava along with the usual array of gemstones and portals.

★ STYX (Styx.zip)

Styx the *DK2* map is a four-player affair with plenty of resources. Although the author warns against being too greedy...

★ STYX2 (styx2.zip)

An upgrade to the original *Styx* map (see above), *Styx2* features a larger number of elven archers but no skeletons. Dirt has been removed and more rooms added, so it's easier to mine the gold. See the readme file for full details.

★ THE LABYRINTH

(thelabyrinth.zip)

The Labyrinth is a two-player map with a knotted maze, surrounded by lava. Anyone wishing to cross to the other side is forced to navigate the tangle in the centre.

★ WAR (war.zip)

A four-player map featuring a fifth, neutral player in the shape of King Reginald and his legion of heroes. Capture this bunch and you'll be a force to be reckoned with. Plenty of secrets and no shortage of resources. And, as the author notes, the artificial intelligence plays superbly.

★ WARZONE

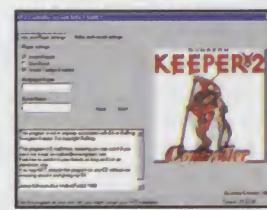
(warzone.zip)

Made using the *DK2* Random Map Generator, *Warzone* is a medium sized three-player map. Works admirably in both skirmish and in multiplayer modes.

DK2 TOOLS AND MAPPERS

★ DK2 CONTROLLER

(DK2Controller.EXE)

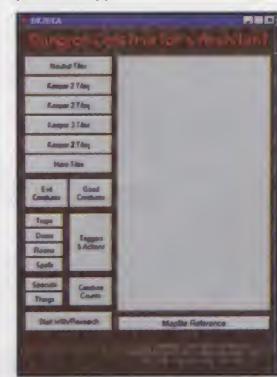


① Arse about with stuff. Hey, you know you want to.

Allows you to fiddle with some of *Dungeon Keeper*'s player and video settings, including gamma levels and sound effect volumes.

★ DK2 DUNGEON CONSTRUCTOR ASSISTANT

(dk2dca.zip)



① DK2DCA, the unofficial sidekick to DK2Mapper.

A small tool to help *DK2* editing freaks make better use of Mark Kinkead's *DK2Mapper*. Mainly used to find variable names easily and to allow simple cutting and pasting direct into map files.

★ DARK OVERLORD'S GUI

(dk2gui.zip)

A *DK2* map utility. It generates an ASCII map suitable for compilation into an existing level via the ubiquitous *DK2Mapper* tool.

★ DK2MAKEMAP

(dk2makemap11.zip)



① Isn't this just so much nicer than a DOS box full of text?

A pretty front end to – you guessed it – *DK2Mapper*. Change the

values you want to change, click the Create button, then Compile.

★ DK2MAPPER (dk2mapper.zip)

Mark Kinkead's *DK2Mapper* is the de facto standard for creating new levels in *Dungeon Keeper II*. It's a text-based hacking program, but it delivers the goods. Use with one of the graphically-oriented partner programs and you'll be sorted.

★ DK2MAPPER GUI

(Dk2MapperGui.zip)



① A tuxedo for *DK2Mapper* by the original programmer.

A graphical front end to *DK2Mapper* by the master of dungeon programming, Mark Kinkead. There are others, but this one's the wasp's nipples.

★ DK2MAPPER

(dk2randommap.zip)

A small tool used to generate random maps that can be compiled using *DK2Mapper*, for skirmish or multiplayer styles of play.

★ DUNGEON KEEPER EDITOR

(Mapper.exe)



① DKE offers instant, graphically-oriented map generation.

A magnificent-looking beast, promising easy and immediate generation of *DK2* maps. Features a well-designed interface and good use of audio. Some features are a little buggy, but the problems are noted in the HTML help file. Well worth looking at. ☺

THE NEW WORLD ACCORDING TO...

RAY GRESKO

Ray Gresko was the driving force behind some of LucasArts' biggest hits but now he's President of his own small development studio working on a game called *Vampire*. We sent Paul Mallinson to Marin, California, to meet the man responsible for the infamous *Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight*

Nihilistic Software's offices are located in a quiet, hilly corner of San Francisco, just around the corner from George Lucas' ultimate hideaway, and home of LucasArts' high profile development studio: The Skywalker Ranch. The close proximity of this world-renowned games outfit to relative newcomers Nihilistic is no coincidence – a good proportion of their 12-strong team once earned their corn working for Mr Lucas on a number of famous past releases.

Ray Gresko, President and Project Leader at Nihilistic, was one of those people. As lead programmer/designer on *Dark Forces*, *Dark Forces II*: *Jedi Knight* and a host of other LucasArts hits, he knows what it's like to make big games for big corporations. At 29 years old, Ray looks a lot younger than most experienced game developers, and comes across as enthusiastic and confident. Until now, he's shied away from the limelight, despite being responsible for some of the most memorable PC games ever made. But now that his new team are fast approaching 'judgement day' for *Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption*, their new 3D RPG, the time has come for him to meet the UK games press face-to-face...

Why did you decide to leave LucasArts and set up Nihilistic in the first place?

Ray: It's basically a natural progression for people. After you've done a couple of games you start to meet a lot of people who you know are really good and you find that you want to work with them.

How did you meet the guys here?

Ray: I worked with a lot of them at LucasArts. The rest were mainly from Cyclone Studios (*The people who made Requiem* – Ed) or Rogue Entertainment (*Known for their Quake mission packs, including the innovative Ground Zero* – Ed), or from either contacts those people knew or new blood that we recruited in. It's hard choosing the right people, but we think we've made a few pretty good picks.

So you didn't fall out with LucasArts then?

Ray: There are things you cannot change in a big company. We wanted to have our own creative freedom in an environment we liked – working with people we liked to work with. The idea behind Nihilistic is: a small group of highly talented, experienced people running circles around overly-large corporate teams. We can make really cool stuff and have just as much fun as development teams in big companies, but have far less red tape. It's a trimming down of the stuff that's not really necessary when making a great game.

Do you think LucasArts put licensing before gameplay?

Ray: I don't think so. The games that we did there... we could have done little knock-offs and not really have produced anything interesting, but I think we were good with the licences. With *Dark Forces* and *Jedi Knight* we thought, 'Okay, people have followed Luke around enough – they wanna see more of the world', so we created a unique storyline, still within *Star Wars* – a little bit edgier – and made a great game out of it.

The Phantom Menace wasn't that well received and hasn't sold particularly well either. What do you think about that?

Ray: At least LucasArts push to make sure they have a lot of unlicensed stuff out there too – look at their adventure games: *Grim Fandango* and the *Indy* stuff. There's a lot of interesting innovation going on there. LucasArts do have a lot of people there focusing on the gameplay and making sure they do great games – with or without a licence. You can't rely on the licence. If the licence is good you get a good theme and background supplied and, yeah, you probably get a few built-in customers, but you can't totally rely on that. You have to make sure that it's a good game first.

Why did you choose the name Nihilistic? The Oxford English Dictionary defines the term Nihilism as "the rejection of all religious and moral principles", or "the assertion that nothing really exists".

Don't you think that's a bit negative?

Ray: Not really. Nihilism, in essence, is a refuting of all the laws and ways of doing things that are currently in use. Starting our own company and leaving the traditional big company development style was very nihilistic of us. It's sort of the basis of revolution and advancement – you have to break a few eggs to make an omelette. The original name came from an evil wizard that I had in one of my stories called Nihil. The name does have a dark twinge to it – most of us here have a little bit of an edge remaining from past experience.



“The mass media still doesn’t understand that these games are not just for kids”

RAY GRESKO,
PRESIDENT OF NIHILISTIC

It all seems to have started off really well, but is there anything that has gone wrong so far?

Ray: The hardest part has been filling the last few places on the team. We didn't have a lead artist until the summer last year and we had an excruciating search to find one. Thankfully we found Maarten (Kraaijvanger - Lead Artist) and he's totally blown us away with his work here. Finding someone outside this group of people that we knew was really hard.

While we're on the subject of 'poaching', what did LucasArts think about you pinching a few key members of their staff?

Ray: We don't really consider it poaching because those people were pretty much gone anyway. George promotes his teams to go external when they're ready.

You worked on *Obi Wan* for LucasArts, didn't you? So why leave part of the way through a project as big and exciting as that? Are you sure you didn't fall out with them?

Ray: I worked on stuff that became *Obi Wan* - technology research mainly. Most of the stuff I'd done probably wasn't even used. Many of the technologies developed for *Jedi* were used across the board in a lot of LucasArts titles, up

to and including the Sith engine which is being used in *Force Commander*.

***Force Commander* didn't look very good when we saw it. What's going on there then?**

Ray: Actually, that's not our code base - they changed direction on the game. I only got to see it really briefly anyway.

WORKING FOR NASA

Unwilling to be drawn into any contentious LucasArts/Nihilistic mud-slinging, it was time to try a broader line of questioning, plucked straight from The Beginner's Guide To Computer Games Journalism...

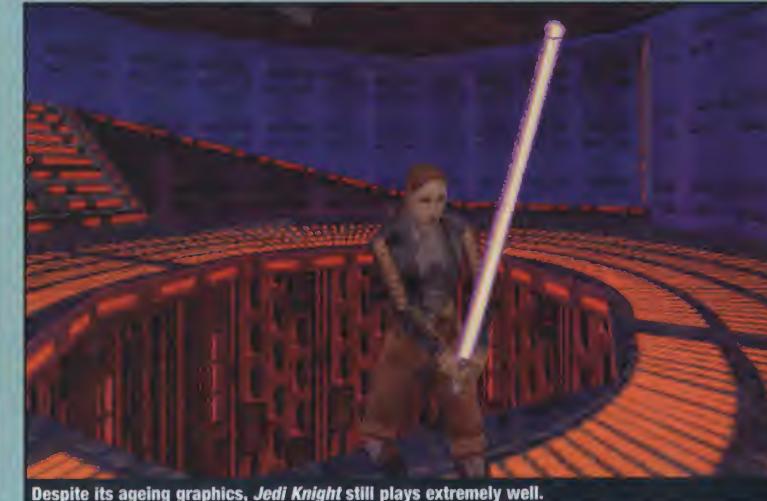


Stormtroopers looking the business in *Jedi Knight*.

The famous 'Millennium Falcon balanced on a light sabre' Jedi trick.



The Nihilistic team proves they can live in the sunlight.

Despite its ageing graphics, *Jedi Knight* still plays extremely well.

How did you first get into the games business?

Ray: I actually came from the robotics industry. I was a robotics programmer, but I was always making games at night. It was an interesting time, I'd done a lot of work for NASA when I was at college – contract work – but when I finished college I sent out some résumés and got a job at Spectrum Holobyte. My first game for them was *Mig-29* – I worked in the advanced Technology Division doing 3D graphics work and high-end technical stuff for future titles. After that a friend of mine on *Mig-29* went to work for LucasArts. He told me they were about to start work on their first 3D shooter. At the time *Wolfenstein 3D* was really popular and I had my little *Wolfenstein 3D* engine clone, so he introduced me to the guys running the show over there and they took me on. *Dark Forces* flowed into *Jedi Knight*, and here I am now. I forget how many years ago it was now...

What about other games from other development houses? How good did you think *Half-Life* was?

Ray: Oh, I loved *Half-Life*. I liked the 'fear factor' in that game. There's a lot of subtle stuff that I don't think some people are aware of, but level designers are. Good game designers are aware of things that illicit a good fear response and there's a lot of that in *Half-Life*. The sound engine in *Half-Life* was incredible – I don't think many people realised just what Valve did with it – if you were in a room and it had a fan in it, they made it so the sound would vibrate off it. It really does add a lot to the realism, and the sound effects of the monsters were pretty cool too.

Where will PC games be in two years time?

Ray: One of the things I'm hot on at the moment is trying to get an emotionally mature quality into my

games. The mass media still doesn't understand that these games are not just for kids and that computer games can offer the same kind of experience that a movie might. Hopefully in a couple of years we'll see more acceptance of intense, subtle, emotional games and more understanding from the mainstream. As technology advances we'll also be able to use more sophisticated methods of advancing the storyline in our games – using perfect lip sync and that kind of thing.

Do you think we'll see genres merging together?

Ray: I see that right now. I don't see genres being all on the same level because you have strategy games with that high-level overview, you have action games which are first-person right up in your face kind of thing, and I think that rather than merging together they will just layer on top of one another. You might have some strategy game where someone will play the commander and another guy will play the guy in a tank – the roles are there, you just play at a different level. That's one thing I can see happening more and more over the next few years.

What's the worst thing about being a games designer?

Ray: It takes a lot out of you – it really does. It requires a huge amount of effort. It's funny because small development studios like us always share office space with other companies – like dentists and sales people, etc – and they usually say to us: "You guys are here all the time!" They call us 'the mole people' because we never turn on the lights. They think what we do is all fun and games, but it's really a lot of hard work. It takes a lot of hard work to build something that is technologically advanced and entertaining.

What do you like most about being a games designer?

Ray: (With an orgasmic groan) Aaaw – just seeing stuff that starts off as a little idea in your head come to life on the screen. That's definitely the coolest thing. Especially now that we have a lot of the art and music coming together on *Vampire*.

BLOOD SUCKERS

Which leads us nicely onto *Vampire: The Masquerade – Redemption*. Nihilistic's first game is to be based on White Wolf's established over-the-table role-playing system (second only to TSR's famous AD&D system in the global popularity stakes). It's a real-time, third-person, 3D role-playing game using Nihilistic's own 3D engine (called Nod – and no, that name's got nothing to do with C&C), with a storyline spanning 800 years, starting off in 12th Century Prague and finishing up in modern-day, pre-millennial New York. *Vampire* recently won a number of major awards at the last Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles ('Best RPG of the Show', etc) and is rumoured to have a truly groundbreaking multiplayer feature that is set to take the online community by storm.

Okay, tell us what's so good about this *Vampire* licence?

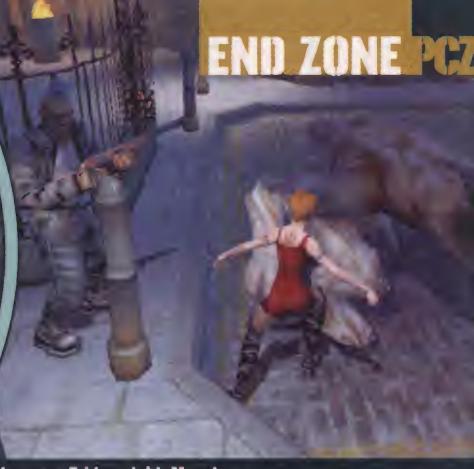
The licence has different blood lines of vampires, which are all unique and have special powers and different ideologies about how they think the world should be set up, and a vampire's role in it. What's so cool about this licence is that there's not only conflict between vampire clans, but also conflict between generations within clans. The older vampires try to keep the younger ones in check and try to keep them in the dark about things



Modern-day vampires are all around us. Apparently.



Vampire is set to blow RPG fans away.



London on a Friday night. Monstrous.



Transylvanian folk dance has never been so popular.



Sucking people's blood has a drastic effect on one's self image.

so that they can control them and use them to their own benefits. Imagine you start out working at a corporation, on the bottom rung of the ladder and no-one ever leaves the positions higher up - the CEO never dies, etc. The only thing to do to get ahead is to back-stab and scheme, which is why there's so much intrigue in the Kindred world. There's a lot of *X-Files* type stuff where vampires think to themselves: 'Am I doing this because I want to do it, or am I being controlled by somebody pulling my puppet strings?'

Your multiplayer mode - Storyteller - sounds quite innovative. What's that all about?

We have a very deep storyline and we've captured the core essence of the *Vampire* licence in the single-player game, but multiplayer blows it wide open. We'll ship with several chronicles, but basically it's an open-ended, 3D role-playing system that people can do whatever they want with. If there's a specific supplementary *Vampire* guide with some weird rule that we didn't implement, people can just role-play it out just as they would around a table.

The 'Storyteller', in essence the DM of the multiplayer game, can change the setting, advance the scene, create their own 3D landscapes - pretty much anything. Our chronicles are built as 'scenes' - specific placements and events that happen in various locations of the game. The Storyteller can apportion experience points at the end of each scene, add new objects or enemies on the fly, and talk to other players in secret. We're releasing our own level editor which is based on Q3 Radiant, and all the tools that will let people create their own chronicles. There are just as many people out there that wanna create their own stories as well as their own levels. Players will be able to distribute their stories online -

they will basically be like digital versions of modules for the paper game.

How are players going to organise such a large gathering of people for something that is essentially a one-off event?

'Online tabletop', as we're calling it, is not a massively multiplayer experience. We've gone in totally the opposite direction to that sort of thing. Massively multiplayer is cool, but we wanted to capture the small group experience of tabletop role-playing.

What's also cool about this is that someone can come up with, say, ten different bars - you know, just like little one or two room areas - and people

“We have a very deep storyline and we've captured the core essence of the *Vampire* licence in the single-player game, but multiplayer blows it wide open”

**RAY GRESKO,
PRESIDENT & PROJECT LEADER OF NIHILISTIC**

can then download them and use them in their own stories. We see different people making different things, and everyone sharing them for use in their own modules.

Also, because our Storyteller game is moderated (by the person running the game), it solves a lot of things such as cheating, booting players out, and keeping the role-playing focused, so that it's always

interesting. Because 'Storyteller' *Vampire* is designed for a small team of people, it will also be easy for players to organise their time - if play is done for the evening and everyone wants to go back to their haven and rest, you say, 'Okay, here's some XP for what you've done', you save the game and everyone leaves.

***Vampire: The Masquerade* sounds very similar to *Marvel's Blade*, on which the Wesley Snipes movie of the same name was based.**

Ray: I heard that the guy who wrote *Blade* had an old, dog-eared copy of the *Vampire: The Masquerade* novel.

You play a lot of *Vampire*?

Ray: Yeah. When we started, we played a lot down at the local gaming store in a mix of live action and tabletop.

Live action role-playing? Did you dress up?

Ray: (Laughs) Well I didn't actually dress up, but we did use props.

A mental picture of Ray running around the nearby hills wielding crosses and cloves of garlic forms in my mind. I laugh before attempting to steer the conversation back to LucasArts and *Star Wars* again. "Star Wars?" asks Ray. "Don't mention that name again!" Obviously all those years churning out camp robots had taken its toll - it was high time for Ray and his pals to work on something far more creatively fulfilling, and that - it seems - is exactly what they're doing. And good on them.

***Vampire: The Masquerade - Redemption* is currently scheduled for a Winter '99 release through Activision.** **PCZ**

COMMENT



Blood, guts, gore, vomit, bodily fluids of all descriptions, along with voyeurism, manipulation and stupidity. No, it's not the latest game that's heading your way, it's what Charlie Brooker sees on his TV every Saturday

★ CASUALTY VICTIM Charlie Brooker

THE GAME OF LIFE

Hey. Here's an idea for a game. Stop me if you think it's sick.

OK, first of all, we use a state-of-the-art 3D engine to produce stunningly realistic visuals. Our game is populated by real people, and we want them looking as authentic as possible. We want convincing body movements and believable facial expressions, complete with lip-synching. Some of them may even use the faces and bodies of well-known people.

OK? Right. Next, we put them in realistic situations – driving a car on a motorway, perhaps. We simulate a busy motorway, with cars and trucks hurtling along at breakneck speed, and we put a car with one of our realistic polygonal people slap bang in the middle of it.

Then we make the car crash.

Let's say it ploughs into the back of a coach. We show our polygonal stooge being thrown through the windscreens and landing beneath the wheels of his own car. There's blood all over the place, and he's screaming in agony (we've hired an actor who's *really* good at screaming to do the voice – we left the audition room with bleeding ears).

Before long, a polygonal ambulance arrives and our victim is ferried to a virtual hospital. There he is prodded, cut open, and operated on, while he's still screaming. It's extremely lifelike and very, very gruesome.

By now you're probably wondering where the player comes into this. Well, here's where: the player just sits there, staring at the monitor, not pressing a button. The point of the game is simply to sit there and watch, for the sake of entertainment.

Nasty, isn't it? If you produced a game like that,

the press would go bananas. But what I've just described is an episode of *Casualty*, one of the most fondly-loved TV shows in the country. Well, fondly-loved by everyone except *me*, that is. I can't stand it. In fact, I'll go as far to say I think it's sick and wrong. Not to mention ghoulish, voyeuristic, manipulative and contrived. And unrealistic. And stupid. And reactionary, nauseating, offensive, mean-spirited and pious. And, did I also mention how boring it is?

NOTIONAL HEALTH SERVICE

Oooh, that damn *Casualty*. It gets away with murder! How come *Kingpin* gets an 18 rating, just because a few heads roll now and again (well, OK, a few heads burst apart like shattered watermelons every couple of seconds), whereas *Casualty* is pumped into our homes, apparently unregulated, straight into the eyes and minds of a nation of horrified children?

Casualty is a deeply unpleasant thing. It's like watching a three-month season of stomach-churning public information films all rolled into one. It plays with your mind. It leaves you frightened to leave the house. In the alternate universe in which *Casualty* takes place, anyone working in a factory, or on a building site, or even attempting to do a little DIY about the house is gambling with their life. Try to saw a bit of wood in half, and 30 seconds later you're reeling around the house with a gory, spurting stump where your arm used to be, toppling backwards into a roaring fireplace before staggering headlong into a churning Moulinex. Thanks to *Casualty*, I'm terrified of my local B&Q. It's like Scotland Yard's 'Black Museum' in

there. I can practically hear the tortured shrieks of the mutilated. They should sue.

Bloody *Casualty*. Every scene should be shot from the point of view of an overhead circling vulture, while the viewers at home wear fake feathered wings. They're always banging on about how authentic all the medical procedures are, and how many doctors they've consulted to ensure an arc of blood pipes across the screen at an appropriate angle, or a gouged eyeball oozes just the right amount of aqueous humor down the cheek of a screaming victim. They went to all this effort in order to appall us efficiently? How disturbing. Still, it's funny how no-one ever gets a huge wooden splinter stuck in their genitals – they only ever get injured in areas we are allowed to see.

HOSPITAL OF LIES

Anyway, sod the medical specialists – why don't they also consult *real people* to check their storylines and see how believable they are? I've seen more credible scenarios in cheap West German porn films (which, let's face it, have a lot in common with *Casualty* – both feature repeated close-ups of engorged body parts and drizzled biological fluids). The plots are sheer pantomime! It's comic-strip hoo-hah! If Charlie from *Casualty* (surely the most smugly punchable character on television) suddenly sprouted wings and flew to the scene of an accident, I for one wouldn't be in the least bit surprised.

People in *Casualty*-world are always either very, very bad (you know – heartless, greasy-haired drug pushers,

“Casualty is a deeply unpleasant thing. It's like watching a three-month season of stomach-churning public information films all rolled into one”

who deserve everything they get) or very, very good (attractive, abused teens, who don't), with little room for anyone in-between these two poles of the moral spectrum, unless of course they've just been injured in an interesting way: “Help! I've got a fishhook lodged in my eye!”

I say we campaign to get *Casualty* banned. Well, either that or we make it more interesting by turning it into a game. To this end, cast your eyes over this handy *Spotter's Guide To Casualty*. Just cut it out, switch on *Casualty*, then tick off the various ailments, injuries, plot devices and clichés as they appear. When you're done, compare your score with that of a friend. The winner gets to change channels. The loser gets a fishhook lodged in their eye.

Go on, do it. Have fun. Knock yourselves out. 

- Blood
- Vomit
- Accident involving toddler
- Blood squirting into air
- Irascible elderly patient angrily denies need for treatment
- Vomit landing on another character
- Unnecessary shot of open wound
- Charlie says “I'm afraid it's too late. He / She can't hear you”
- Charlie attempts to placate impatient man at reception desk
- Doctor suddenly realising patient has serious rare condition
- Family awaiting news of injured relative launch into embittered argument in private waiting room
- Patient reluctant to discuss unexplained bruising
- Patient played by minor celebrity
- Nihilistic teenager takes drugs / burgles property
- Nihilistic teenager dares soft middle-class friend to do something dangerous
- Worker operating in unsafe / illegal conditions
- Paramedic forced to enter perilous environment
- Patient in trouble with the police.
- Relative tearfully apologises to lifeless body of spouse / offspring
- Senior member of staff delivers stinging put-down to obnoxious drunk
- Charlie / Duffy walks into room unannounced, interrupting argument between two characters
- Member of Holby Casualty staff forced to treat own relative / lover / ex-lover
- Nihilistic teenager causes traffic accident via illegal hi-jinks
- Sinister, ignorant NHS managerial type says something heartless
- Character clearly played by middle-class actor faking 'streetwise' accent
- Impatient man repeatedly harasses hospital receptionist
- Pensioner knocked through plate glass window into blazing room filled with lions and razor wire

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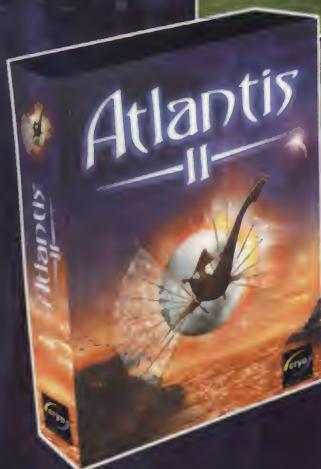
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